T/SCR/36/5/6

SPEECH MADE BY LES FORSTER AT CEREMONY OF SCATTERING THE ASHES OF THE LATE HARRY M'SHANE. NELSONS MONUMENT APRIL 1988;

How appropiate that the friends of Harry M'Shane should meet here to today to scatter his ashes

To socialists of yesteryear, this was indeed, hallowed ground The Chartists spoke here. Willie Nairn, Bruce Glazier, and John F Armour, – Pioneers of the first Socialist Organization in Glasgow, The Social Democratic Federation, – Campaigned and fought for the right of "Free Speech", on this green sward.

In those heady days, it was referred to by socialists as the University on the green Surely, Harry M'Shane was one of it's brightest students.

Here at Nelson's Monument, John M'Lean, Jimmy Maxton and Willie Gallacher denounced The Misery and Evils of Capitalism

On "Glasgow Green", Harry M'Shane with Guy Aldred, had to Fight all over again For The Right of Free Speech.

Before The outbreak of The Second World War, — Harry and Hundreds of Glasgow workers Fought a Pitched Battle with Mosley and his Thugs The Fascists Retreated with a Bloody Nose.

In Later years The U.C.S workers gathered Here in Protest

Harry was a soap box man, a street corner orator. At "Fleshers Haugh", "Jail Square" or "Nelsons Monument", he chronicled the annals of Glasgow's poor.

He fought against evictions, he sided with the homeless against authority, he exposed sub-let racketeers,

Harry M'Shane was a Marxist to the core, — recognising that the poor will always be with us, as long as capitalism is with us.

His politics were not of the parish pump.

His roots were Scottish, and he never forgot that.

A reporter from "The New Yorker" magazine described him as "a rugged Scot with a rebelious face"

When he was Scottish Editor of "The Daily Worker", covered the Knoydart story. This was about demobbed servicemen seizing back their land

James Barke, the eminent Scots novelist, he counted as a friend. He was over the moon when Barke published his trilogy of novels about the life of Robert Burns

THIS IS NOT THE LAST ACT OF REMEMBERANCE. JUST AS he FOUGHT FOR FREE SPEECH ON his FAVOURITE "GLASGOW GREEN", — THOSE OF US gathered here may yet have TO Fight against THE ENCROACHMENTS OF PROPERTY DEVELOPERS WHO WOULD DESTROY THIS dear green PLACE.

HARRY ALWAYS REGRETTED THE FAILURE OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT TO HONOUR IT'S PIONEERS, — IT'S UNSUNG heroes. THOSE WHO WERE his FRIENDS HAVE a GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO REDRESS THE BALANCE

HARRY M^cSHANE, — YOU BUILT BETTER THAN YOU KNEW!

~~THIS IS NOT THE LAST ACT~~ OF

~~REMEMBERANCE~~

T/SCR/36/5/6

Lecture to John M'Lean Society – By Les Forster

Aspects of Harry M'Shanes Political Life,

The subject for todays meeting of the John M'Lean Society, could not be more appropriate, for after all he was one of the Society's founder members,

Although he died six years ago on the 13th of April 1988, – the memories of him still remain fresh in my mind.

I knew him as a comrade in arms, and as a friend for more than 45 years

Some people saw Harry as mainly a leader of the unemployed workers movement – but there was much more about the man than just that, In my speech some things will be left out. I will concentrate on the essentials – Harry M'Shane the practical socialist. Harry M'Shane the thinker.

Concern about unemployment and the unemployed must be high on the agenda at any gathering of socialists

Nobody was more concerned about this matter than Harry McShane. — In later years (he) he recalled: — "Before the first Hunger March was held at all, John McLean and myself held the first meeting of the unemployed on Glasgow Green. That was in November 1920. — We went from there to Glasgow City Chambers, where we saw the Labour Group, and got permission to have a free let of the City Hall; every Thursday or Sunday afternoon we held meetings in which John McLean was the main speaker. I took the chair — there were others who spoke like Captain White" — Captain White trained the volunteers of the Irish Citizens Army, who took part in the Easter Rising.

ON 27th AUGUST, 1987, ONE YEAR BEFORE HE DIED — WROTE A LETTER TO MARGARET THATCHER ASKING HER TO COME TO SCOTLAND TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT

IN THIS LETTER, HE POINTS OUT THAT A PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTER —ANDREW BONAR LAW MET A DEPUTATION FROM THE NUWM AND GLASGOW TRADES COUNCIL — THE MEETING TOOK PLACE IN GLASGOW AND LASTED 2½ HOURS.

TOWARDS THE END BONAR LAW SAID TO HARRY — "IF I WAS IN YOUR POSITION, I SHOULD BE MAKING SIMILAR DEMANDS ON BEHALF OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

THE N.U.W.M DEMANDED THE RIGHT TO FULL MAINTAINANCE, AND ABOLITION OF THE "MEANS TEST"

AT THAT TIME A MARRIED COUPLE WAS GETTING ONLY 15/ A WEEK

ON HIS RECOLLECTIONS HARRY MENTIONS THE FIGHT TO GET AN INCREASE OF SIXPENCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE UNEMPLOYED — THEY GOT IT MAKING THE ALLOWANCE TWO SHILLINGS

THIS HE SAYS:- "WAS A LOT OF MONEY IN THOSE DAYS. — CONCESSIONS WERE WRESTED FROM PARISH COUNCILS, WE DID A LOT OF BULLYING TO GET THEM."

I THINK WE DID A LOT OF GOOD. I THINK TO KEEP THE FIGHT GOING WAS A TREMENDOUS THING, THAT'S WHATS WRONG NOW. ITS NOT BEING DONE NOW.

RIGHT TO THE END OF HIS LIFE THE LACK OF FIGHT BACK BAFFLED HIM. QUOTE LETTER HE WROTE TO GLASGOW HERALD

IN THE DAYS OF THE HUNGER MARCHES, UNEMPLOYED SITUATION WAS BAD, TODAY IT'S MUCH WORSE

WITH 3 MILLION IN BRITAIN OUT OF WORK — AND A POSSIBLE 12 MILLION IN EUROPE THIS YEAR

IN SCOTLAND OVER A QUARTER MILLION ON THE DOLE

IN GLASGOW, 1 IN 4 YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE NO JOBS

IN THE MARYHILL DISTRICT OF GLASGOW, UNEMPLOYMENT, DIRE AND SERIOUS. — HERE THERE IS NO FIGHT BACK — BUT THERE ONCE WAS

STILL ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN MARYHILL IS A MAN CALLED JOHN FERNS A VETERAN HUNGER MARCHER WHO CAN STILL REMEMBER HOW THE UNEMPLOYED FOUGHT, IN THOSE BYEGONE YEARS.

At Maryhill Labour Exchange There was a Manager, a nasty piece of goods who relished humiliating those signing on

On a flimsy pretext would stop their benefit money, his constant cry was of shirkers not looking for work

The Maryhill Branch of the N.U.W.M organized a protest march to Milngavie which was at least 5 miles away — the target, the managers residence in that town.

400 took part in the march, and were greeted by the local Milngavie unemployed

The crowd gathered outside the manager's house, persistently keeping up a barrage of shouts and chants

The upshot, the manager was removed from Maryhill to an Exchange far far, away.

Harry M'Shane kept up the fight, speaking at a Peoples March for Jobs Rally at Manchester and the Royal Albert Hall in London.

And finally in an interview given to "Socialist Review" in June 1981, sums up his views on unemployment

"Last night speaking on television Michael Foot was talking about unemployment, that it would be with us for a long time to come. — For the first time he was admitting that unemployment is permanent under capitalism he had no solution to offer, and we can't raise peoples hopes we have to make propaganda and make clear that there can be no solution to the problem of unemployment under capitalism. We have to argue that alongside the fight to improve the conditions of the unemployed — we must fight all the time to change the system, — thats the only solution"

1 T/SOR/36/5/6

Introduction

I am delighted and grateful for being allowed to speak here today on some aspects of Harry McShanes life and work.

What could be more appropriate, remembering him at a gathering convened by the John McLean Society, for after all, Harry was a founder member

Although he died 6 years ago on the 13th April 1988, — the memories of him still remain fresh in my mind
I knew him as a comrade in arms and a friend for almost 45 years

Some people saw Harry as a leader of the Unemployed Workers Movement but knew little else about the man

In My Speech Somethings will be left out, that is unavoidable because of the time factor.

Harry M'Shane the Practical Socialist. Harry M'Shane the Thinker — Those are my main themes. But for light releif I will refer briefly to another ~~side~~ to his wife.

Concern about Unemployment, and the Unemployed must be high on the agenda at any gathering of Socialists.

Nobody was more concerned about this matter, than Harry M'Shane. — In later years he recalled; — "Before the first Hunger March was held at all John M'Lean and myself held the first meeting of the unemployed on Glasgow Green"

[Contd over

"THAT WAS IN NOVEMBER 1920. WE WENT FROM ~~TO~~ THERE TO GLASGOW CITY CHAMBERS, - AND WE SAW THE LABOUR GROUP, - AND GOT PERMISSION TO HAVE A FREE LET OF THE CITY HALL, .. EVERY THURSDAY OR SUNDAY AFTERNOON WE HELD MEETINGS IN WHICH JOHN M'LEAN WAS THE MAIN SPEAKER, I TOOK THE CHAIR. THERE WERE OTHERS WHO SPOKE LIKE CAPTAIN WHITE"

CAPT WHITE TRAINED THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE IRISH CITIZENS ARMY WHO WERE TO TAKE PART IN THE EASTER RISING.

ON 27TH AUGUST 1987, A YEAR BEFORE HE DIED, WROTE A LETTER TO MARGARET THATCHER ASKING HER TO COME TO SCOTLAND TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT - IN THIS LETTER, HE POINTS OUT THAT A PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTER - ANDREW BONAR LAW MET A DEPUTATION FROM THE NUWM AND GLASGOW TRADES COUNCIL.

The Meeting lasted two and a half hours.

Towards the end Bonar Law said to Harry — "If I was in your position I should be making similar demands on behalf of the unemployed".

What they were asking for was abolition of the means test — and full maintainance

At that time a married couple was getting only 15/ a week

On his recollections Harry mentions the fight in Glasgow to get increases for the unemployed children, of sixpence. They got it making the allowance 2 shillings

Sixpence, he says, "was a lot of money in those days. — Concessions were wrested from Parish Councils — we did a lot of bullying to get them"

"I THINK WE DID A LOT OF GOOD, I THINK TO KEEP THE FIGHT GOING WAS A TREMENDOUS THING, THAT'S WHATS WRONG NOW. IT'S NOT BEING DONE NOW"

RIGHT TO END OF HIS LIFE THIS LACK OF FIGHT BAFFLED HIM. — ALTHOUGH THE SITUATION BAD IN DAY OF HUNGER MARCHES, — IT IS INFINITELY MUCH WORSE NOW.

3 MILLION IN BRITAIN
A POSSIBLE 12 MILLION
IN EUROPE THIS YEAR

GLASGOW – 1 IN 4 YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE NO JOBS

MARYHILL DISTRICT UNEMPLOYMENT DIRE AND SERIOUS. HERE THERE IS NO FIGHT BACK, — BUT THERE ONCE WAS.

STILL ALIVE, AND LIVING IN MARYHILL IS A MAN CALLED JOHN FERNS A VETERAN HUNGER MARCHER.

IN HIS TIME THEY DIDN'T CALL THEM JOB CENTRES, - IT WAS THE 'BUROO'

AT MARYHILL LABOUR EXCHANGE THERE WAS A MANAGER WHO WAS A NASTY PIECE OF GOODS, WHO DELIGHTED AND RELISHED, HUMILIATING THOSE SIGNING ON.

ON A FLIMSY PRETEXT WOULD STOP THEIR BENEFIT MONEY HIS CONSTANT CRY WAS OF SHIRKERS NOT LOOKING FOR WORK ——————

THE MARYHILL BRANCH OF THE N.U.W.M ORGANIZED A PROTEST MARCH TO MILNGAVIE WHICH WAS AT LEAST OVER 4 MILES AWAY. — THE TARGET BEING THE MANAGERS RESIDENCE IN MILNGAVIE

400 TOOK PART IN THE MARCH, AND WERE GREETED BY THE LOCAL UNEMPLOYED WHEN ENTERING THE TOWN.

The Crowd gathered outside the Managers House. Then persistenty kept up a Barrage of Chants and Shouts. The upshot of all this, was the Immediate Removal of this Fellow, He was Transferred to another Branch, well clear of the Maryhill men.

Quote Harry's letter to Glasgow Herald.
He speaks at Peoples March for Jobs Rally, — Manchester, Then at Rally, Albert Hall, London.

In an iterview given to Socialist Review in June 1981 sums up his views on Unemployment

(over

Quote:

" Last Night Speaking On Television, Michael Foot was talking about Unemployment, That it would Be with us For a long Time to come. For The First Time He was admitting That Unemployment is Permanent under Capitalism. He Had No Solution to Offer; and we can't Raise Peoples Hopes;

We have to Make Propaganda, and Make Clear That There can Be No Solution to The Problem of Unemployment under Capitalism

We Have to argue That alongside The Fight to Improve The Conditions of The Unemployed — We must Fight all The The Time To Change The System — Thats The Only Solution

T/SCR/36/5/6

Like Those of us who left the CP in 1953 — We supported wrong Policies — Harry M'Shane was no exception

It took us a long time for the penny to drop — see through the myth that Russia was a Socialist State. When doubts started creeping in, — The leadership said Being Anti-Soviet meant Being anti-Socialist

By then it became evident that British CP had never once criticised Russian Foreign Policy

The truth is we were Brain washed.

Falsification of History was the order of the day. Standard Reading, — The History of the CPSU. — and that fatuous absurdity written by the Dean of Canterbury 'The Socialist Sixth of the World'

Leon Trotsky was written out of the Russian Revolution of 1917 – Became a non person

I know for a fact that Harry M'Shane never accepted this downgrading of Trotsky – although he held reservations about his proposals to militarise industry

The myth shattering Kruschev revelations put paid to all this – But by this time Harry had left the CP.

By the 1950's the Party he had joined in 1922 was changing out of all recognition

I have always thought you had to be inside C.P. – to really know what it was like.

Democratic Centralism was the rule. The membership were never told if there was a minority vote against certain decisions

= Take out

It is not generally known that Harry McShane was threatened with expulsion during his N.U.W.M. days.

In his last years inside CP. splits began to emerge, here, in Australia, and France, — centred around a policy document, — called "The British Road to Socialism".

Here proclaimed the idea that Socialism can be acheived in this country through the Ballot Box — and by peaceful means. The class struggle, the role of the State Police, Army, and law played down.

Now we learn that the British Road, was written, framed, and articulated by Joseph Stalin.

4

A leading light in CP Circles Here in Glasgow at that time was a man called Jim Hill, who became Secretary of Glasgow Trades Council.

On a speaking tour of CP branches he repeatedly said, all you need to know about Marxism is contained in "The British Road to Socialism."

Now wait for it, Hill for a time was a Party Industrial Organizer – and a Probation Officer to boot who had never worked in industry

At this Harry was furious and attacked "The British Road for all he was worth. For his efforts he was taken off the Party list of speakers

When he left CP, They attacked Him with venom, saying he had Returned To The Catholic Church and a hackey of The Capitalist Press
He survived They didn't

After leaving CP Harry Began To Read again, The Lives and ideas of Those who warned long ago That The Russian Revolution was Being Betrayed, and prophesying The Eclipse of Marxism in That Country Among Them Angelica Balbanoff, Emma Goldman, Madame Kollontai, and Victor Serge.

At 90 years of age Harry McShane Proclaimed with Confidence

"The Only People, who can talk about a Future are Marxists, and Shouldn't Be ashamed To Say So"

10 years Before, when 80, he wrote;

"Marxist Thought is about The Future of Man, - and takes us Far Beyond The aims of The Existing Reformist Parties
Marxist Theory Seeks Realisation in The Self activity of The Masses"

This was The Philosophy he embraced - and it stayed with him To The day, That He Shuffled of This Mortal Coil,

In 1958, a Book was Published in America Called "Marxism and Freedom." — Written By Raya Dunayevskaya, who when a young women Had acted as Leon Trotsk's Secretary, When He was living in Exile in Mexico. The Preface was By The French Marxist, Herbert Marcuse

After Reading The Book Harry Was Enthralled By It's Conceptions and Conclusions To Him This was Marxism with The Cobwebs and Trappings Surrounding dogma Swept away.

By 1971 it went into a Second edition, with a new Preface Written By Harry M'Shane

IN THE PREFACE HE WROTE; ——

"THE PUBLICATION OF MARXISM AND FREEDOM, MARKS A NEW DEPARTURE FROM THE DULL AND STEREOTYPED MATERIAL SENT OUT BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO BE REGARDED AS THE AUTHORISED CUSTODIANS OF MARXIST WISDOM — RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA HAS PRODUCED A WORK THAT WILL BE OF GREAT SERVICE TO ALL WHO ARE READY TO INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR A FREE AND HUMANE SOCIETY"

WHAT IMMENSELY ATTRACTED HIM WAS HER SUPERB HANDLING OF ACTS OF WORKERS MASS ACTION TAKEN INDEPENDENTLY OF POLICAL PARTIE'S THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871, THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917, EAST GERMAN UPRISING IN JUNE 1953, THE STRIKE OF 10,000 MINERS IN JULY 1953, AT SLAVE CAMPS OF VORKUTA, HUNGARIAN UPRISING OF 1956

X. LOOKED AT NOW THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF RUSSIAN TOTALITARIANISM

If you had met Harry in those days he was full of bounce, — you would have thought he was on his way to Utopia

He had just read an article in a French journal by Maxim Rubel, — translated into English

Rubel argued, — "That Marx did not abolish Utopia, he rejuvenated it, and enlarged its scope, — with him Utopia becomes one single movement in two stages, — revolution and creation".

Before Marx the Utopians thought and imagined creation independently from the very men who were to build the new city, — man was Marx's first and foremost concern"

Harry M'Shane thought there was a connection between Marx and Scotland - and there certainly was in the shape of Adam Smith, Adam Fergusson, and John Millar.

He went back again to reading "The Wealth of Nations"

In Vol I of Capital, Marx refers to Smith 40 times. On Vol II — makes 28 mentions

Adam Smith gave series of lectures at Glasgow University where he was a Professor — the title of the lectures — "Justice, Police, Revenue and Arms"

On top of this Smith wrote a treatise - "Theory of Moral Sentiments"

Adam Smith (1723 - 1790)

Among notes left by Harry M'Shane after his death he underlines the importance of Adam Fergusson, the Scots Philosopher. Fergusson was a son of the manse, educated in Perth and deputy chaplain to the Black Watch. Was Prof. of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University

In Marx's "Poverty of Philosophy" Marx expressed favourable comments about Fergusson.

Harry had read Fergusson's Essay on the History of Civil Society — and was quite struck by his thoughts.

Because of the time factor I can only make one quote

Fergusson (1724–1816)

(over

Fergusson wrote;

"The proper study of mankind is not the apes but man. He is in short a man in every condition, — and we can learn nothing from the analogy of other animals"

At this time the emphasis was on studying animals — and relating them to man.

Surely Fergussons sentiments not too far a cry from Marx's concerns about man.

JOHN MILLAR WAS CERTAINLY A LIBERTARIAN WITH REPUBLICAN SYMPATHIES.

HE SUPPORTED THE AMERICANS IN THEIR WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

ACTIVE IN STRUGGLE TO ABOLISH SLAVERY. DEFENDED THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. WAS A MEMBER OF "THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE"

THOMAS MUIR WAS ONE OF MILLAR'S PUPILS, HIS ELDEST SON WAS SENT INTO EXILE LIKE MUIR

JOHN MILLAR WAS HOUNDED BY GLASGOW WITCH HUNTERS.

HARRY HAD READ HIS BOOK (1806) ORIGIN OF RANKS AND IN SOME WAYS WAS IMPRESSED

QUOTE; "THE PURSUIT OF RICHES BECOMES A SCRAMBLE IN WHICH THE HAND OF EVERY MAN IS AGAINST EVERY OTHER"

Harry warmed to certain aspects of Smith's life and thoughts. The audience must remember that the Tory adjunct and supporter of Thatcher "Adam Smith Institute" was on the rampage distorting Smiths intent.

Adam Smith spoke with disdain of merchants and manufacturers, describing them thus;

"Mean rapacity, monopolising spirit – who should never become or allowed to rule mankind. Civil government so far as it is instituted for the security of property – is in reality instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor – or those who have some property, or have none at all"

Harry M'Shane Never got carried away with Extravagant Claims about The "Scottish Enlightenment"

He Recognised That Men Like Smith, Millar and Fergusson were Bound 'By The development of The Society They Lived in'

x Smith Thought The System we had was The Best we could get

I can Well Remember Him taken Exception To Claims Being Made By Communist Party Pundits — That Robert Burns, were He alive Today would Be a Communist, —

In His Look Back into History and His Research, I Think He did Find a Certain Scottish Connection to Marxist Thought

x Mention Wm Thomson from Cork x
Engels Mentions Him Along with Smith
Smith Like Thomson Discovers Surplus Value
But Thinks The Cap. System is worth Sticking to
Thomson Thought it should Be Destroyed

Although a confirmed atheist for almost a lifetime, it did did not blunt his interest in the Scottish Reformation.

Outside, and inside the Mitchell library, studied this momentous period in Scottish history.

All the characters in the drama he spoke of in a most knowledgeable fashion, Knox, Mary Queen of Scots, Wishart, Cardinal Beaton, Luther, and Calvin
Knox's Papal adversaries he kent well

He took his studies a stage further — Sir David Lyndsay's satire, The Three Estates, had been a box office hit at the Edinburgh Festival. It was a biting attack on the Church.

Harry Thought The People of Glasgow Should Have The Chance To See This Magnificent Masque or Play. He called on The Lord Provost, urging him To Bring The Show To The City

That Media, it was Put on at St. Andrews Halls, And Well Received Before Packed audiences.

As I Come To a Close, There is Much Left Out. His years as a Journalist with The Daily Worker and Forward. His Period Editing The S.W. Fed. Paper, "Socialist Revolt" His Spell in The Klondike.

On The day of His death, and Subsequent days after Tributes were Paid. ——— One of The Most Moving, came From The Pen of Paul Foot

PAUL FOOT;

"He died in an Old Peoples Home, He left a Few Books to his Friends. He Had Survived on his Pension almost without Supplement for the last 28 years of his life. He Had never any Property, - yet He was perhaps the Most Contented Man I have ever Met, utterly happy, as long as he was Fighting for his Class - - -

He was, is, and will Be, an inspiration; and Example to us all"

T/SCR/36/5/6

Harry Mc Shane

The first time I had any real experience of Harry Mc Shane was when I was appointed by the Glasgow City Committee of the Communist Party to be the election agent for Peter Kerrigan in the Gorbals by-election of 1948, caused by the fact that the sitting M.P. Georgie Buchanan (one of the I.L.P. group of the original Red Clydesiders) who had been made the MinIster of Pensions by the Atlee goverment.

I have no doubt that as I had a long experience as group leader in the factory branch in John Browns and was active in the Bridgeton branch of the Communist party. Also had formed a housing association in Bridgeton, this gave me the tough pedigree that could face up to McShane and the rebellious members in the Gorbals branch, so as a good little Stalinist I did what I was told.

I was viewed with suspicion by the Gorbals members and I remember after my first meeting of the election committee I was leaving the premises with Bob Saunders who was the district organiser of the Plumbing Trades Union As Harry Mc Shane had a room in the Gorbals branch premises he closed the door after us and as he did so he said " where do you stay " quite cheerily I said " oh we go east " Harry replied "that is quite appropiate all the wise men come from the east."

However as I started organising and working with Harry and the Gorbals comrades the cynicism with which they greeted some of the decisions of the Glasgow committee were notentirely misplaced and I found to my sur= prise there were sound political differences that I will deal with later.

As the date of the by-elecyion was announced it became necessary for me to give up my job in Fairfields yard where I worked as a plumbers welder. So I became a full time agent for the period of the election campaign, as I was also a shop steward in the yard I knew there would be no way I could return. As I was married with a young family I assumed that I would receive the normal wages that party organisers got, but to my surprise Bob McIlhone the Glasgow secretary gave me at least 50% more. I felt uncomfortable about it so I told Harry he told me " dont take any hand-outs get the rate for the job,"so I returned the cash.

Regarding the election campaign it was really outstanding and for a while it looked like Kerrigan could break the mould and be successful, but we reckoned without the silent majority and the catholic vote. Even with that it was the best vote for a communist candidate in Scotland it was over 8.000. The labour candidate was Alice Cullen who had been a councillor for eleven years in the Glasgow Corporation but she was not at the races with over a thousand activists from the party and the Y.C.L. we really set the Gorbals alight but did not get the votes.

Harry McShane

There were also several disquieting features of the election campaign that was not apparent to most comrades involved. While Peter Kerrigan was an imposing looking candidate standing over 6ft tall, with grey distinguish hair, and as ex junior football player with Yoker Athel-etics he had the stature of a very fit man. In reality he was quite an aloof person who tended to lecture to people rather than talk to them.I never got on friendly terms with him in the eight weeks or so of the election. He never strayed from the party line, in the election committee meetings x were comletely unimaginative and quite predictable.

His contribution

Where as Harry McShane's proposals and suggestions wre always original and mostly different, this no doubt was to be expected as his long time record of activity in the labour movement , his position as Scottish editor of the Daily Worker and chairman of the Glasgow branch of the N.U.J gave him access to most newspapers and the media, so Peter Ker-rigan got involved in issues that none of the other candidates knew about. It was Harry who gave Alice Cullen the Labour Candidate the title of silent Alice He knew she had been on the Glasgow Corporation for el-even years and had never spoken once at a Corporation meeting.

So I was flabbergasted two weeks into the camaign when I got a phone call from John Gollan to the Gorbals rooms telling me that he was sending up Malcolm McEwen to relieve Harry McShane from the job as press secretary for the election. He told me to tell Peter Kerrigan but not to tell Harry, this I could not do, I immediately told Harry and then tolld Kerrigan. I had absolutely no quarrel with Malcolm McEwen he was a very capable journalist having been a feature writer with the Daily Worker. This was my first but not my last experience of double dealing within the Communist Party.

This was the beginning of a close relationship x that lasted for over forty years. The next battles took place in the Glasgow City committee where we regarded as deviationists, but in actual fact we wanted the party to get involved in all struggles whether official or unofficial On one occasion we were accused of being adventurers because Les Forster suggested during a campaign that we should throw a few thousand leaflets out of the top windows at Lewis's store into Argyle street. Another issue that created uncertainty was housing, while they x did not condemn the com-rades,who in order to spotlight the shortage of houses with a waiting list of nearly a hundred thousand,had started to assist people in unsanitary houses to with hold their rents. x Also at this period when there were many thousands of empty houses and premises in private hands who were seen by their owners as an assett while those of us involved in the struggle for homes seen them as places to be utilised to rehouse the homeless. This lead to the squatters movement which to begin with was entirely spontane-ous but a few comrades like Les Forster and John Gold from Bridgeton were to the fore. It is significant that the the only leading communist that was involved with them helping to get publicity and legal aid whwre necessary was Harry McShane,

with Harry McShane

Party full time officials

later support was luke warm

Another small issue that came up during this period was the fact that two leading officials in the party had got posters printed saying they were " Housing candidates " in the municipal elections no mention of their party membership or the fact that they were full time officials in the Communist Party. Harry regarded this as deception and the posters were destroyed but the malaise in his opinion had not been eradicated it was part of the growing desire for respectability within the movement instead declaring your communist principles and joining the workers in struggle.

Harry in his book " No Mean Fighter " mentions a few events that lead to him leaving the Communist Party. He was against paid officials who did like discussion within the party on the line that had been laid down from the central committee. They tended to dictate policy and direct any action through official channels and more and more frowned on small unofficial strikes . In contrast those party members who had left the party for purely selfish motives to either join the Labour party or become a full time official in a trade union these ex communists still seemed to be acceptable to the party leaders and even although in some cases went on to become M.Ps even peers in the House of Lords they still were regarded as allies despite the fact that in thought and action they were real right wingers.

I remember Harry told me about a meeting of the comintern in Moscow in 1920s when the British delegation on the role of the C.P.G.B. in Britain took a particular decision, the two Scottish delegates supported it. The meeting then adjourned for lunch when they returned to Harry's surprise the previous decision was dropped and the exact opposite was put forward Finlay Hart the other Scottish delegate went along with the change,Harry did not, he was always suspicious of unanimous decisions was not afraid of disagreements and discussion provided they lead to action. I feel this was one of the reasons he was respected within the labour movement and Finlay Hart was the only prominent member of the C.P. that was present at Harry's funeral.

The one question that is always raised when Harry spoke at a meeting, why did you leave the Communist Party? as a matter of fact one of the last meetings he spoke at was one organised by the Glasgow Labour History society in Strathclyde University the subject was the Russian revolution as usual the same question was raised. Remember thirty four year after he left it still came up, his answer was straightforward because it was no longer a revolutionary party and the Soviet Union was not or ever had been a socialist country. Long before Duchek called for Communism with a human face Harry had turned toMarxist Humanism and did notrequire the Hungarian tragedy to resign but when it happened he immediately supported it and in answer to the Soviet allegations about Fascists and the C.I.A. he said "when do you ever see Fascists setting up workers councils".

While Harry remained in the Communist Party forover thirty years his influence within the party was not too influencial particularly with the new leaders who had attended the Lenin school in Moscow. His conversion to Marxism took a different route he was one of the best read people in s ocialist movement. He always returned to Marxism and never tired of explaining to young people its importance, one of his favourite stories was how Marx took Pierre Proudhon's "Philosophy of Poverty and showed how" by turning Proudhon on his head when he wrote " The Poverty of Philosophy that it was the emerging working class with their labour power for sale that were the Gravediggers of capitalism and not the petty bourgeois. He had a great deal of respect for the Scottish philosophers like Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith and relished the fact that while Karl Marx rejected some of their conclusions he paid tribute to the contribution they made to the developement of philosphical theory.

Harry McShane

Harry McShane was indeed the last of the Red Clydesiders he never lost his belief in the socialist cause and while he had many offers to join many parties from the labour party to most of the left wing parties he was rather suspicious about some of their rigidity and after his experiences in the communist party had some doubts about a vanguard party. He was no armchair philosopher and it always gladdened his heart when the workers won a victory as result of strike action.

While Harry had access to many establishment figures in Scotland he never used it in a personel capacity but I have seen use it to ensure that they listened to what the workers had to say or to arrange release or bail for anyone wrongly imprisoned, he was completely incorruptible. At sixty years of age after he left the communist party he returned to his trade as an engineer in Harlands and Wolfs he really was quite contented working with his hands.

He never sought any honours although after some persuasion he accepted the Freeman of the City of Glasgow award but when after it was presented by the Lord Provost and the Glasgow Cathedral minister instead of the usual national anthem the band struck up I Belong To Glasgow much to annoyance of the minister. When one looks at the Labour Lords and all the people who have used the movement for personal advancement, I think about Harry McShane. A few days before he died I asked him how he was for money. He said " I am fine I have over forty pounds," let that be his epitaph after 80 years as a Marxist.

Harry McShane 1891 - 1988

The death of Harry McShane the last of the revolutionary Marxists at the age of 96, three weeks before his 97th birthday has left a void in the movement that will be hard to fill. He also left a legacy of hope that those of us who were privileged to have known him and were active with him will be inspired in the days that lie ahead.

The day before he died he visited his old stamping ground of the Glasgow Green and the Peoples Palace to look at old photographs of pioneers of the socialist movement and a Clarion shield for the Labour Party centenary exhibition.His last thoughts were on the need for all Marxists to reurrect the forgotten heroes of the socialist cause to take the movement back to its roots and challenge the so called realists who are curbing class action, he used to used to say that no Marxist can denounce the class struggle.

He welcomed the Russian revolution of 1917 and hailed the establishment of workers and soldiers soviets and for over thirty years defended its extistence. Despite his membership of the communist party he had doubts about many of the Soviet Unions policies and the slavish support of the C.P. leadership in Britain. When he resigned the C.P. in July 1953 he began a serious study of Stalinism and by the time of the Hungarian revolution he was convinced that the Soviet Union was based on state capitalism and regretted that he had not taken a stance during the early purges. When so many outstanding revolutionaries were wrongly condemned.
He had no such hesitation with the Hungarian revolt, he seen it as genuine workers uprising against a tyrannical bureaucracy kept in power by the Red Army. His comments when the Russians blamed the United States and the Catholic church was "when do you see these people setting up workers councils."

He was always associated with rank and file action and never held an official position in the movement in his life except at trade union branch level. However high on his list of achievements was the out=standing fight he led on unemployment in 1920&30s in the National Union of Unemployed Workers it is readily accepted that it was one formost unofficial rank and file organisations that has risen in this country .

Contd.

When Harry spoke about the N.U.W.M. you got the feeling he was really proud about its activity, not only about its achievements and there were many, the fact that it challenged and pricked authority. Whether it be local councill-ors, M.P.s even the police and the courts to assert the rights and dignity of the workers in face unconcern intimidation and even brutality as the Scot's say 'it warmed the cockles of his heart'. While they were fearless and confident despite there long years of unemployment it was also a force quite proud of its unity and discipline. One of their best fights was on the right of free speech most organisations accepted that the police had the last say on whether a demonstration or a meeting could take place in a particular street or road the N.U.W.M. challenged this by telling the police they only administer the law they do not make it and proceeded to hold their meeting or demonstration. If taken to court as they often were they did not engage expensive lawyers but defended their own actions and took the concequences.

In his later years after Thatcher came to power he could never understand how in a period when the workers were under attack as never before, when anti- union legislation was the order of the little or no defence was organised by the labour movement. He felt that while successive labour labour goverments had intoduced reforms that gave some benefits to the working class they took the trade unions into the goverment apparatus through consultitive committees and boards and sending trade union officials to the house of Lords. All this had the effect of making the official trade unions part of goverment and hindered any challenge to legislation that tried to get restrictions on wage levels. At the same time there was no rank and file movement wothy of the name so the advent of Thatcher left the workers unprotected with the place seekers as leaders. He felt that with 3 million unemployed there should have been a greater effort to build a rank and file organisation that would defend the workers.

Harry McShane 1891 - 1988

The death of Harry McShane the last of the revolutionary Marxists at the age of 96, three weeks before his 97th birthday has left a void in the movement that will be hard to fill. He also left a legacy of hope that those of us who were privileged to have known him and were active with him will be inspired in the days that lie ahead.

The day before he died he visited his old stamping ground of the Glasgow Green and the Peoples Palace to look at old photographs of pioneers of the socialist movement and a Clarion sheild for the Labour Party centenary exhibition.His last thoughts were on the nedd for all Marxists to reurrect the forgotten heroes of the socialist cause to take the movement back to its roots and challenge the so called realists who are curbing class action, he used to used to say that no Marxist can denounce the class struggle.

He welcomed the Russian revolution of 1917and hailed the establishment of workers and soldiers soviets and for over thirty years defended its extistence. Despite his membership of the communist party he had doubts about many of the Soviet Unions policies and the slavish support of the C.P. leadership in Britain. When he resigned the C.P. in July 1953 he began a serious study of Stalinism and by the time of the Hungarian revolution he was convinced that the Soviet Union was based on state capitalism and regretted that he had not taken a stance during the early purges. When so many outstanding revolutionaries were wrongly condemned.

He had no such hesitation with the Hungarian revolt, he seen it as genuine workers uprising against a tyrannical bureaucracy kept in power by the Red Army. His comments when the Russians blamed the United States and the Catholic church was "when do you see these people setting up workers councils."

He was always associated with rank and file action and never held an official position in the movement in his life except at trade union branch level. However high on his list of achievements was the outstanding fight he led on unemployment in the 1930 in the National Union of Unemployed Workers it is readily accepted that it was one formost unofficial rank and file organisations that has risen in this country.

Contd.

When Harry spoke about the N.U.W.M. you got the feeling he was reallyproud about its activity, not only about its achievements and there were many, the fact that it challenged and pricked authority. Whether it be local councillors, M.P.s even the police and the courts to assert the rights and dignity of the workers in face ofconcern intimidation and even brutality as the Scot's say 'it warmed the cockles of his heart'. While they were fearless and confident despite there long years of unemployment it was also a force that proudof its unity and discipline. One of their best fights was on the right of free speech most organisations accepted that the police had the last say on whether a demonstration or a meeting hould take place Tpea particular street or road the N.U.W.M. challenged this by telling the police they only administer the law they do not make it and proceeded to hold their meeting or demonstration. If taken to court as they often were they did not engage expensive lawyers but defended their own actions and took the concequences.

In his later years after Thatcher came to power he could never understand how in a period when the workers were under attack as never before, when anti- union legislation was the order of the little or no defence was organised by the labour movement. He felt that while successive labour labour goverments had intoduced reforms that gave some benefits to the working class they took the trade unions into the goverment apparatus through consultitive committees and boards and sending trade union officials to the house of Lords. All this had the effect of making the official trade unions part of goverment and hindered any challenge to legislation that tried to get restrictions on wage levels. At the same time there was no rank and file movement wothy of the name so the advent of Thatcher left the workers unprotected with the place seekers as leaders. He felt that with 3 million unemployed there should have been a greater effort to build a rank and file organisation that would defend the workers.

Harry McShane 1891 - 1988

"All for the cause"

On the 13th of April Harry McShane veteran socialist and Marxist died at the age of 96 three weeks before his 97th birthday. There are many highlights in Harry's life, many struggles many issues, but I think there are some issues he has continuously fought for and never wavered in his struggle for justice and truth.

Ireland.

The question of the fight for independence and the ending of partition has never been far from his thoughts all his eighty odd years in the socialist movement. He always said that those people in the labour movement who ran away from the fight for Irish freedom betrayed the very basis of the class struggle that allowed the exploitation and oppression of the Irish people by the English establishment to continue as it had done for over seven centuries. One of his first acts of protest he carried out when he was a young teenager was at an election meeting in Kinning Park where one of the infamous family of Dunglas's was a candidate. Harry got up before a meeting of 150 people and moved a resolution calling for the release of Jim Larkin who had been arrested during the 1908 Dublin lockout. He was immediately thrown out but he did not go straight home, he went to a local shop and bought several cakes of pipe clay and chalked all the streets around the calling for the release of Jim Larkin. Along with John McLean who wrote pamphlet called "The Irish Tragedy: Scotlands Disgrace" Harry wrote the introduction and sold it all over the country at socialist meetings.

One of the last occasions he spoke on Ireland was at a meeting in the Woodside Halls where he shared a platform with Bernadette Devlin during the fight for civil rights in Northern Ireland, the hall was surrounded over a thousand Orange men lead by Pastor Glass and the several hundred people who attended had to get police protection going into and leaving the hall. Both of the speakers got a very warm reception but the whole audience burst into laughter led by Harry when Bernadette said the only regret she had for gettihg expelled from the House of Commons for punching Reginald Maudling the Home secretary was that the punch was not hard enough. (shades of the mace.)

Harry McShane 1891 - 1988

"All for the cause"

On the 13th of April Harry McShane veteran socialistand Marxist died at the age of 96 three weeks before his 97th birthday. There are many highlights in Harry's life, many struggles many issues, but I think there are some issues he has continuously fought for and never wavered in his struggle for justice and truth.

Ireland.

The question of the fight for independence and the ending of partition has never been far from his thoughts all his eighty odd years in the socialist movement. He always said that those people in the labour movement who ran away from the fight for Irish freedom betrayed the very basis of the class struggle that allowed the exploitation and oppression of the Irish people by the English establishment to continue as it had done for over seven centuries. One of his first acts of protest he carried out when he was a young teenager was at an election meeting in Kinning Park where one of the infamous family of Dunglas's was a candidate. Harry got up before a meeting of 150 people and moved a resolution calling for the release of Jim Larking who had been arrested during the 1908 Dublin lockout. He was immediately thrown out but he did not goe straight home, he went to a local shop and bought several cakes of pipe clay and chalked all the streets around the calling for the release of Jim Larkin. Along with John McLean who wrote phamphlet called "The Irish Tragedy Englands Disgrace" Harry wrote the introduction and sold it all over the country at socialist meetings.

One of the last occasions he spoke on Ireland was at a meeting in the Woodside Halls where he shared a platform with Bernadette Devlin during the fight for civil rights in Northern Ireland the hall was surrounded over a thousnad Orange men lead by Pastor Glass and the several hundred people who attended had to get police protection going into and leaving the hall. Both of the speakers got a very warm reception but the whole audience burst into laughter led by Harry when Bernadette said the only regret she had for gettihg expelled from the House of Commons for punching Reginald Maudling the Home secretary was that the punch was not hard enough. (shades of the mace.)

Harry McShane 1891- 1988

2 " All for the Cause"

Prior to 1908 when he joined the B.SPP. Harry spent all his spare time reading and studying every available source on religion, materialism and atheism to counter and debate with the free thinkers who dominated the platforms in the platforms in the Glasgow Green. When he became a Marxist and accepted the material conception of history he was one of the most informed socialists on religion at that particular time.and particularly on the catholic church. In his early years he hudenoug debates not only in the Glasgow Green but in the columns of theatony catholic newspapers of that period, raising the contradiction of being accepting the teachings of the church and being a socialist. He was not alone as John Wheatly justified his position from the opposite in the columns of the Catholic Observer and the Catholic Truth Society.All this reading and study held Harry in good stead inlater years when he did correct leading catholic clergy when they incorrectly quoted the Papal encyclicals or the rerum novarum.

National Union of Unemployed Workers.

No record of Harry McShanes

No record of Harry McShanes contribution to the workers movements would be complete without some reference to his work with the unemployed. The N.U.W.M. was probably the finest rank and file movement ever seen in Britain. It was probanly the highlight of his life he made it a fearless fighting organisation despite it being unofficial, it was a well respected and put the case for the unemployed at meetings rallys and marches all over the coutry. He took them into restuarants, hotels, the stock exchanges and council chambers anywhere that showed the real face of the unemployed. He never forgot to encourage the rank and file to fully participate at every stage of the fight to demand full employment or full maintainence, demanded food, clothing, household goods as a right and not a gift.

Harry McShane 1891 - 1988

"All for the cause."

Marx and Engels

His guiding philosophy was the teachings of Marx and Engels he worked closely with John McLean they formed the Tramp Trust with James McDougall Sandy Ross, Peter Marshall. They travelled as far as Aberdeen and Carlisle spreading the Marxist message sometimes sleeping rough after they had held several meetings in the course of the day. Harry always linked his Marxism to th the class struggle and any group or factory of workers who were involved in strikes or lockouts could be assured of his support, he always said you can not be neutral when the workers are under attack.

One of the last developements in Harry"s philosophy was his discovery of RayhaDunayevskaya book "Marxism and Freedom" its expounding of the human=ism of Marxism struck a cord in his thinking against the buraeucracy of partyzealots he had met in many parties and organisations. For the first time he felt the human face of Marxism had been unveiled. He was asked by the author to write a preface for the second edition, his modesty was such that he felt even after sixty odd years in the socialist movement he was not qualified to undertake such a task. His modesty disguised a strength of character and determination that never accepted defeat, right to the end he had complete confidence in the working class and the socialist cause. We were privileged to have known such a special man.

Hugh Savage

or three main items, the realisation of which would further the realisation of the Socialist ideal. But a programme was not an election address."
It was this rather nebulous argument that won the day and the Maclean-Petroff resolution was defeated by a large majority.

A similar fate befell another move by Petroff and Maclean in their attempt to change the party and the way it was managed. The issue centred round control of Justice , the official organ of the BSP, and the the Twentieth Century Press, the party's publishing house which functioned on a commercial basis. The major shareholders included Hyndman and a number of his followers and this group(largely synonymous with the 'Old Guard') determined the policy of the party press. At both the 1913 and 1914 party conferences the conduct of Justice had been debated and criticised and at the 1914 conference Maclean moved a resolution, seconded by Petroff, which, in effect, would have meant the newspaper being taken over by the party and its editor made subject to annual election.[23]

The failure of these moves had significant long term consequences but they do,nontheless, indicate that new ideas and new initiatives , which challenged the authority of Hyndman and the 'Old Guard', were becoming more important to rank-and-file members.[24] For Hyndman's power was gradually being eroded; this was most evident in the debate on militarism, without doubt the most contentious issue faced by the party in the pre-war years.

Hyndman and his followers in the party leadership were firm advocates of re-armament to combat the perceived 'menace' of German imperialism. In particular they demanded a massive increase in military expenditure to provide for a 'Citizen Army' and a 'big Navy' and openly criticised the government for their failure to respond to the threat from Germany. Opposition to this view came from such figures as Theodore Rothstein, Zelda Kahan and John Maclean who argued that such a policy was dangerously ambiguous. On the one hand it overlooked the similarities between British and German imperialism, and, on the other, created an unholy alliance of socialism with chauvinism amd capitalism. The first open clash between the two rival factions occurred at the 1911 party conference but it was not until two years later that the anti-militarist group achieved their first major success. Support for this group had increased to the extent that the leadership, quite openly, attempted to shift the focus of debate away from militarism to freedom of conscience. This would enable members to hold views and opinions on any subject, apart from

Harry McShane. contd.

No assement of Harry McShane would be complete without reference to his life long dedication to Marxism he was no arm chair philosopher but used it to lead the workers in their battles against the class enemies and their supporters. He repeatedly said it was the only doctrine that showed the way forward and we should not be ashamed to say so.

From the Paris Commune to the Hungarian revolution no other philosophy has shown the way to socialism. He always said lets rescue it from the parrots who use it as labels and apply it to the situation. It unites the workers be they catholic or protestant, jew or arab, black or white no other philosophy has the answers.

"

The History Man"

Harry McShane was a historian without a P.H.D. he had an essential knowledge of various periods in Scottish history The Reformation and the impact of John Knox had a fascination over him, like so many others of the socialist pioneers he was self educated.Glasgows Mitchell library was one of his favourite haunts, Michael Donnelly former curator of the Peoples Palace can recall seeing him surrounded by books of a historical nature.

In company and in conversation he could site facts and quotes from the life and times of John Knox. He did not see Knox as just a follower of Calvin or a firebrand breathing flames of anti catholicism. He thought of him as an intelligent Scot making justifiable sermons in the context of the 16th century reformation. The dialogues between Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox he had read many times, his considered verdict was that perhaps through an excessive streak of stubborness and clinging too much to dogma Knox threw away a lifeline of accomodation offered by Mary.

An enthusiast of working class history he was the first to revive memories of the strikng Calton Weavers of 1787, Glasgow Trades Council commissioned him to write a booklet depicting this struggle. A stone remembering the six martys killed by the military, on the instructions of the Glasgow Lord Provost and the town council,was erected by public subscription in 1836. To their credit Glasgow Trades Council in 1931 renewed the stone, promted by Harry McShane the council agreed to erect an adjacent stone dedicated to the Calton Weavers. This stone was put in place in the Abercromby Street burial ground and Harry spoke at the commemoration ceremony in 1951

"The History Man"

Harry McShane was a historian without a P.H.D. he had an essential knowledge of various periods in Scottish history The Reformation and the impact of John Knox had a fascination over him, like so many others of the socialist pioneers he was self educated.Glasgows Mitchell library was one of his favourite haunts, Michael Donnelly former curator of the Peoples Palace can recall seeing him surrounded by books of a historical nature.

In company and in conversation he could site facts and quotes from the life and times of John Knox. He did not see Knox as just a follower of Calvin or a firebrand breathing flames of anti catholicism. He thought of him as an intelligent Scot making justifiable sermons in the context of the 16th century reformation. The dialogues between Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox he had read many times, his considered verdict was that perhaps through an excessive streak of stubborness and clinging too much to dogma Knox threw away a lifeline of accomodation offered by Mary.

An enthusiast of working class history he was the first to revive memories of the strikng Calton Weavers of 1787, Glasgow Trades Council commissioned him to write a booklet depicting this struggle. A stone remembering the six martys killed by the military, on the instructions of the Glasgow Lord Provost and the town council,was erected by public subscription in 1836. To their credit Glasgow Trades Council in 1931 renewed the stone, promted by Harry McShane the council agreed to erect an adjacent stone dedicated to the Calton Weavers. This stone was put in place in the Abercromby Street burial ground and Harry spoke at the commemoration ceremony in 1951

"

The History Man"

Harry McShane was a historian without a P.H.D. he had an essential knowledge of various periods in Scottish history The Reformation and the impact of John Knox had a fascination over him, like so many others of the socialist pioneers he was self educated.Glasgows Mitchell library was one of his favourite haunts, Michael Donnelly former curator of the Peoples Palace can recall seeing him surrounded by books of a historical nature.

In company and in conversation he could site facts and quotes from the life and times of John Knox. He did not see Knox as just a follower of Calvin or a firebrand breathing flames of anti catholicism. He thought of him as an intelligent Scot making justifiable sermons in the context of the 16th century reformation. The dialogues between Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox he had read many times, his considered verdict was that perhaps through an excessive streak of stubborness and clinging too much to dogma Knox threw away a lifeline of accomodation offered by Mary.

An enthusiast of working class history he was the first to revive memories of the strikng Calton Weavers of 1787, Glasgow Trades Council commissioned him to write a booklet depicting this struggle. A stone remembering the six martys killed by the military, on the instructions of the Glasgow Lord Provost and the town council,was erected by public subscription in 1836. To their credit Glasgow Trades Council in 1931 renewed the stone, promted by Harry McShane the council agreed to erect an adjacent stone dedicated to the Calton Weavers. This stone was put in place in the Abercromby Street burial ground and Harry spoke at the commemoration ceremony in 1951

Writing For The Worker.

During the second world war Harry McShane was the Scottish correspondent for the Daily Worker and remined in his post till 1952, his reports covered a wide gammit ranging fromthe crofters land seizure at Knoydart to the unmasking of the kangaroo courts inside Polish army camps in Scotland.

Latterly a doyen among industrial reporters and a kenspeckle figure on thje conference circuit,over the years he had built up a wide circle of contacts inside the labour movement, being privy to inside information helped him to pull a few scoops .Never selfish with knowledge he shared and assisted many a gentleman of the press over a difficult stile.

A respected member of the National Union of Journalists and always in friendly terms with his fellow scribes such as .Jack House, John Kossacks and Cliff Handley. He was well kent in the Scottish office in Edinburgh, with municipal affairs being his abiding interest with the housing question high on his agenda.

Perhaps his lust for a big story about housing came in the year 1951, reporting the agitation and strikes against the sale of council houses at Merrylee in Glasgow.By this time he had become completely disenchanted with the Communist Party.Behind the scenes he was having a running battle with the leaders.Even when still a party member they removed him from his position at the Daily Worker.

The same tactic was be used much later against Peter Fryer when he was asked to leave the Daily Worker because of editorial suppression of his dispatchs from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. After leaving the Communist Party , in 1953 the Forward the Scottish Socialist weekly asked him to do a series of articles. When Billy Graham the American Evangelist came to Glasgow's Kelvin Hall, Harry was to write one of his best stories, it was headed "There's No Business Like Show Business.

Writing for the press was so different in those days, word processors, discs ,tapes and recorders were not the tools of the trade. It was the pen, the pencil and the typwriters you were considered eguipped if you could do shorthand in a notebook. Harry could type and he could do bit of shorthand but he always thought that style was the essence of good writing. Books on grammer and punctuation and literary composition he found of great help.

His newspaper training never left him, he was just as metic ulous [preparing a duplicated news sheet for the Socialist Workers Federation called the New Commune under Harry's guidance stories were published that others hadn't got a big splash was made with Lenin's last will and testament. One issue was devoted to lengthy extracts from Krushevs

Writing For The Worker.

During the second world war Harry McShane was the Scottish correspondent for the Daily Worker and remined in his post till 1952, his reports covered a wide gammit ranging fromthe crofters land seizure at Knoydart to the unmasking of the kangaroo courts inside Polish army camps in Scotland.

Latterly a doyen among industrial reporters and a kenspeckle figure on thje conference circuit,over the years he had built up a wide circle of contacts inside the labour movement, being privy to inside information helped him to pull a few scoops .Never selfish with knowledge he shared and assisted many a gentleman of the press over a difficult stile.

A respected member of the National Union of Journalists and always in friendly terms with his fellow scribes such as .Jack House, John Kossacks and Cliff Handley. He was well kent in the Scottish office in Edinburgh, with municipal affairs being his abiding interest with the housing question high on his agenda.

Perhaps his lust for a big story about housing came in the year 1951, reporting the agitation and strikes against the sale of council houses at Merrylee in Glasgow.By this time he had become completely disenchanted with the Communist Party.Behind the scenes he was having a running battle with the leaders.Even when still a party member they removed him from his position at the Daily Worker.

The same tactic was be used much later against Peter Fryer when he was asked to leave the Daily Worker because of editorial suppression of his dispatchs from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. After leaving the Communist Party , in 1953 the Forward the Scottish Socialist weekly asked him to do a series of articles. When Billy Graham the American Evangelist came to Glasgow's Kelvin Hall, Harry was to write one of his best stories, it was headed "There's No Business Like Show Business.

Writing for the press was so different in those days, word processors, discs ,tapes and recorders were not the tools of the trade. It was the pen, the pencil and the typwriters you were considered eguipped if you could do shorthand in a notebook. Harry could type and he could do bit of shorthand but he always thought that style was the essence of good writing. Books on grammer and punctuation and literary composition he found of great help.

His newspaper training never left him, he was just as metic ulous [preparing a duplicated news sheet for the Socialist Workers Federation called the New Commune under Harry's guidance stories were published that others hadn't got a big splash was made with Lenin's last will and testament. One issue was devoted to lengthy extracts from Krushevs

disclosures of life under Stalin.Out of the resrticted inc
size New Commune was born a new bigger and better paper
called Socialist Revolt, once again Harry was in his elem-
writing, editing and encouraging others to put pen to paper.

e

The History Man.

Philosophy meant a lot to Harry McShane, the two Adams Ferguson and Smith he was very fond of. Adam Ferguson had been Professor of Philosophy and Natural Science at the University of Edinburgh from 1778 to 1785, he had originally trained for the clerical profession and for sometime was chaplain to the troops.the untowards young aristocrat surely a surprising choice to be mentioined and be highly rated by Karl Marx in his book the Poverty of Philosphy. Ferguson had written a treatise called "History of Civil Society "in 1755.Adam Ferguson was taking the first stabat a theory and a question that was to loom large in the volumes of Marx's Capitall.It was considerate and appropriate that Hugh Savge should quote Ferguson at Harry McShanes funeral.

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy on the 5th of June 1723 he was educated at Glasgow College from 1737 to 1740 studying Latin,Greek,Mathematics and Moral Philosophy. His baptism into the academic world was at Edinburgh University where in the winter months from1748 to 1749 lectured on English literature.There he was breaking new ground with a subject that never had been tackled before. From 1751 to 1764 was a professor at Glasgow University and was tremendously popular with his students, this fame seems to rest with the publication of the "Wealth of the Nations" in 1776, undoubtedly he was the first in the field with some explanation of economics For that reason he was dubbed the father of Classical Economy, but he had othjer strings to his bow, in 1759 he wrote the "Theory of Moral Sentinents".

Adam Smith could never in sense be described as a hardened establishment figure, when at Glasgow University he never conducted a Sunday class on Christian evidence. It was said that on his arrival at Glasgow University petitioned the senaters to be relieved of the duty of his opening his class with a prayer.The famous and some times infamous David Hume was a close and devoted friend of Smith. Consorting with Hume the Atheist was considered unbecoming for a University professor but all through his life Adam Smith never wavered in his support for his friend David Hume.

The Smith memory can get along quite well without help from the looney right, and their Adam Smith Institute. Their knowledge of the Kirkcaldy sage is very slim and sometimes verges on the pathetic.

Harry McShane had to burst the Tory pretence and sham at the Bi-Centenary conference on Adam Smith. On the platform that day amongst others was Lord Boyle at that time the education minister in the Tory Goverment and J.K.Galbraith from the U.S.A.

Speaking from the body of the hall Harry pulled no punches with hammer blows that sent his opponents reeling, he quoted a letter from Adam Smith to Sir John Sinclair; 'I dislike all taxes that may effect the necessary expenses of the poor.they according to circumstances either oppress the people immediately, subject them, or are repaid with great interest by the rich.'

Piling on the agony, he was to cite Smith,s attitude to labour and labourers, when he commented "that if working men they would be put down by the authorities" this fervent plea was to let the real Adam Smith stand up and let him jump out of the Tory straitjacket.It was a tour de force, Lord Boyle was hanging on the ropes, his reply in the main concentrated on Harry McShane and it revealed the educator deficient in the knowledge of a famous Scot.

A professor from Japan neatly summed up things when referrring to Harry's contribution said " it takes a Scotsman to know a Scotsman",

Changing Faith

There is a general impression of Harry McShane that is fame rested with his position as an unemployed workers leader in the Hungry thirties. This is a caricature of the man it has to be rembered that he started out in life as a Catholic who in his teens was ardent in defending his faith.His first contact with socialists came through attending their public meetings, and challenging their beliefs.

Harry was well versed in the scripture, he had some knowledge of the "Papal Bulls" the encyclicals that were proclaimed from Rome.The socialists he discovered were tough nuts to crack, they were dedicated promising some sort of heaven on earth. Organised religion they argued was useless in halting the ravages of capitalism, Harry would go home and think again. his conversion to socialism was as dramatic as it was deep.

Now on the other side, his fromer fellow catholics were to suffer the whiplashof his tongue for being fae prophets, Free thought literature he took to like a magnet,becoming an avid reader of Ingersoll and Chapman Cohen.

After joining the Communist party in 1922 he had two visits to Russia but was not impressed when viciting an "Atheist Museum". He thought the "Anti-God " propganda was crude and have an adverse effect in dispelling religious superstition. Christian socialists like Conrad Noel,George McLeod and Geoff Shaw had his admiration. In his later years he was to win the respect of his religous opponents like Archbishop Winning.His approach to churchgoing men and women was not hangdog if the clerics could throw in their lot with the socialist movement they were more than welcome.

The History Man"

Harry McShane was a historian without a P.H.D. he had an essential knowledge of various periods in Scottish history The Reformation and the impact of John Knox had a fascination over him, like so many others of the socialist pioneers he was self educated.Glasgows Mitchell library was one of his favourite haunts, Michael Donnelly former curator of the Peoples Palace can recall seeing him surrounded by books of a historical nature.

In company and in conversation he could site facts and quotes from the life and times of John Knox. He did not see Knox as just a follower of Calvin or a firebrand breathing flames of anti catholicism. He thought of him as an intelligent Scot making justifiable sermons in the context of the 16th century reformation. The dialogues between Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox he had read many times, his considered verdict was that perhaps through an excessive streak of stubborness and clinging too much to dogma Knox threw away a lifeline of accomodation offered by Mary.

An enthusiast of working class history he was the first to revive memories of the strikng Calton Weavers of 1787, Glasgow Trades Council commissioned him to write a booklet depicting this struggle. A stone remembering the six martys killed by the military, on the instructions of the Glasgow Lord Provost and the town council,was erected by public subscription in 1836. To their credit Glasgow Trades Council in 1931 renewed the stone, promted by Harry McShane the council agreed to erect an adjacent stone dedicated to the Calton Weavers. This stone was put in place in the Abercromby Street burial ground and Harry spoke at the commemoration ceremony in 1951

The History Man.

Philosophy meant a lot to Harry McShane, the two Adams Ferguson and Smith he was very fond of. Adam Ferguson had been Professor of Philosophy and Natural Science at the University of Edinburgh from 1778 to 1785, he had originally trained for the clerical profession and for sometime was chaplain to the troops.the untowards young aristocrat surely a surprising choice to be mentioined and be highly rated by Karl Marx in his book the Poverty of Philosphy. Ferguson had written a treatise called "History of Civil Society "in 1755.Adam Ferguson was taking the first stabat a theory and a question that was to loom large in the volumes of Marx's Capitall.It was considerate and appropriate that Hugh Savge should quote Ferguson at Harry McShanes funeral.

Adam Smith was born at Kirkcaldy on the 5th of June 1723 he was educated at Glasgow College from 1737 to 1740 studying Latin,Greek,Mathematics and Moral Philosophy. His baptism into the academic world was at Edinburgh University where in the winter months from1748 to 1749 lectured on English literature.There he was breaking new ground with a subject that never had been tackled before. From 1751 to 1764 was a professor at Glasgow University and was tremendously popular with his students, this fame seems to rest with the publication of the "Wealth of the Nations" in 1776, undoubtedly he was the first in the field with some explanation of economics For that reason he was dubbed the father of Classical Economy, but he had othjer strings to his bow, in 1759 he wrote the "Theory of Moral Sentinents".

Adam Smith could never in sense be described as a hardened establishment figure, when at Glasgow University he never conducted a Sunday class on Christian evidence. It was said that on his arrival at Glasgow University petitioned the senaters to be relieved of the duty of his opening his class with a prayer.The famous and some times infamous David Hume was a close and devoted friend of Smith. Consorting with Hume the Atheist was considered unbecoming for a University professor but all through his life Adam Smith never wavered in his support for his friend David Hume.

On The Soap Box.

What was he like as a public speaker?there was no flashy rhetoric with little substance. H e was not an orator in the mould of Nye Bevan, Harry Pollitt or Arthur Horner. a street corner and soap box man vintage, Glasgow Green or Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, almost always speaking without notes. Question time was his forte, few could match him in debate. After leaving the Communist Party he spoke regularly at open air meetings at Drury Street in the heart of Glasgow.

There was always "Party" diehards at his meetings with very little to say except why did you leave the Communist Party. year in and year out they kept asking this same question. It was so inane and ludicrous, when he was over 90years of age speaking to a packed meeting in the Strathclyde University a fellow stood up in the audience and asked him the same old chestnut about leaving the Communist Party, Harry's instant reply was "why did you stay in"? end of story. The questioner was dumfounded and speechless.

In his lifetime he shared the platform with some of the greats of the socialist movement, he toured Scotland with John McLean and other members of the "the tramp trust". He spoke with the legendery Tom Mann at the market town of Mansfield.in his later years he was doing solo spots all over the country.His friend the late Bill McCulloch before he died could still recall vividly an evening in a pub at Kilburn listening to Harry on the Irish question. Sheila Rowbotham eminent socialist and feminist was so moved after hearing him speak that she wrote a little poem as a tribute to him.

He spoke with Bernadette Devlin at the Woodside Halls in Glasgow, the hall was surrounded by hundreds of jeering Orangemen and hundreds of police to escort the audience in and out the hall.Much sought after with invitations to speak to public gatherings from the Glasgow Bar Association whom he addressed on the question of Marxism and Law.He addressed and debated at many universities in Scotland and England.He spoke to the German Goethe Institute in Glasgow. All this activity he relished with enthusiasm, when old father time started to catch up with him when he was in his nineties his public appearances had to be severly curtailed probably the last time he spoke in public was at a May-Day in the Glasgow Green when they were also paying tribute to the Calton Weavers martyrs on the 200 anniversary of their murder of 1898.

The main speaker on the May-Day platform that day was Ron Todd of the Transport and General Workers Union who said it was an honour to speak on the same platform as Harry McShane and Elspeth King of the Peoples Palace presented Harry with a special medal that she had produced in commeneration of the Calton Weavers.

Notes
On Harry McShane
From McLean

Harry McShane
The Last Of The Last Clydesiders

Preface.

The autobiography of Harry McShane "No Mean Fighter" covered a period from his birth May 1891 up to 1953 the year he left the Communist Party. Some mention is made about the years after but was cursory. From 1953 to 1988 the year he died was perhaps the best years of his life. Before he threw in his lot with the new emergent Communist Party of Great Britain, he was already a confirmed Marxist, a revolutionary socialist.

Many who left the commmunist party following the Hungarian revolution of 1956-sought solace by joining the labour party, some disappeared into the limbo of trade union officialdom others just stopped doing anything political.Harry McShane was made of sterner stuff, he donned his thinking cap, went b ack to reading all over again the early writings of Karl Marx when he was a young hunanist-and the older Marx who wrote Capital volume zonr to Three.

Despite what happened in Rusia since 1917 he neve expressed regret at supporting the revolution in its infancy. Like his colleague at that time John McLean-saw it as a great uprising from below. Long before he left the communist party in 1953 he realised things had gone all wrong, The hopes engendered by the Russian Revolution, were dashed and cruelly betrayed.

How this came to pass, he set about finding out, reading about the lives and opinions of some of the early revoulutionaries who had been there. They were sending out warning signals laced with predictions as what was likely to happen inside the Soviet if the wrot was not stopped. As well as being a thinker, Harry was a practical man, along with the late Eric Heffer and other kindred spirits who had left the commmunist party, they dormed an organisation called the Socialist Workers Federation, while at the sametime launching an newspaper called Socialist Revolt.

The Socialist Workers Federaration was not a political party those connected with it had no high or grandiose ambitions except spresading socialist propaganda by word and mouth. For a while Harry McShane was a regular contributer to "Forward" the socialist weekly writing a series of articles. All his political life he relished the challenge of debate- it was for hime the water of life. Opponents he never feared, taking the view, that the bigger they are the harder they fall, and they dont come much bigger than catholic Archbishop WQinning and Tory Minister of Education Lord Boyle.

Well into hjis late eighties and even to his nineties he was much in demand as a platform speaker rousing audiences at the Free Trade zhall in Manchester, and the Albert Hall in London.

NOTES
ON HARRY M'Shane
FROM M'Lean
By
Nan Milton

X Harry heading Sh STWRD Weirs
FOUNDATION Member B.S.P.
MMBR Clyde Workers' Cttee
Harry Sells paper Vanguard

X 1919-1920 Loses his Job
M'Lean asks him to be a
professional revolutionary
X She says he had talent for
political writing

TOM MITCHELL WAS EDITOR OF
"THE SOCIALIST"
Important - Harry was reporting
in the Socialist
Harry visits M'Lean every
week in Barlinnie
Harry writes pamphlet "Remembering
John M'Lean
MITCHELL editor of "THE SOCIALIST"
also in prison
1922 Harry joins CPGB

WHY DID M'Lean not Join
CPGB?
(over

Harry McShane ②

McLean said
"In spite of my keen desire to go to Russia, in spite of my equally keen desire to help Lenin and the other comrades. I am not prepared to let Moscow dictate to Glasgow. The Communist Party has sold itself to Moscow, with disastrous results both to Russia and the British revolutionary movement"

x H. McShane Evicted from his home in [Oatlands] = Gorbals vast protest demonstration org. by Sc WRKRS REPUB PARTY x
1922?

McLean Joins SDF around 1903

①

What was he like as a public speaker. There was no flashy rhetoric with speeches of little substance. He was not an orator in the mould of Bevan, Pollitt, or Horner. He was a street corner man, a soap box performer of the vintage speakers ~~Corner~~ Hyde Park corner and Glasgow Green. His speeches were thought out in advance. He usually spoke without notes. ~~When~~ Question time ~~came round~~ was his forte. ~~He was in his element!~~ Few could match him in the cut and thrust of debate.

When he left the Communist Party in 1953 he was followed around by diehards with very little to say except; Why did you leave the Party?

The crushing reply to a daft
Question was his forte

At the magnificent age of 90
Years and a bit more while
speaking to a packed meeting
at Strathclyde University on
the significance of May Day
a fellow stood up in the audience
and asked him the old chestnut
Why did you leave the
Communist Party
Harrys instant rejoinder was
Why did you stay in it.

The questioner was left
hanging on the ropes.
dumbfounded and speechless

Books meant a lot to Harry M'Shane. ~~In truth~~ They were an important part of his life. Perhaps he would have objected to being called a scholar and a gentleman.

He could be scathing of politicians who climbed the social ladder, but shunned the tree of knowledge

Inside the Mitchell Library (down among the) in the archives, and ranged along two long shelves is the "Harry M'Shane Collection"

Which is on offer is universal and catholic in taste

(2)

Among his books he had favourites
One was "The Decline and Fall
of The Labour Party" by John
Scanlon. This book was
an indictment of Labour
after the betrayal and fall
of the Right DIS Honourable
Ramsay McDonald. ——— X

X Scanlon knew what he was
talking about, a former
skilled shipyard worker
who graduated into Journalism
through the anti-war Socialist
paper "Forward"
For a time Secretary of Wallsend
Labour Party, then part
time Secretary to John
Wheatley when he was Minister
of Housing.

Throughout the book, Harry, has marked passages with pencil. Suffice to quote but one, referring to the rise of the Labour Party

"A great machine was fashioned and fed by thousands of the most loyal souls who ever trusted in political leaders

Within 30 years ---- Mr Winston Churchill was able to state, with obvious satisfaction and with truth, that those who believed they had fashioned a machine for working class emancipation, had only succeeded in building a ladder by which men climbed to place and poetry"

Second hand bookshops were dotted all over Glasgow, but not today. Edinburgh once the Mecca for this sort of thing, is in decline

Harry McShane was Bargain conscious and a bit of a connoisseur when it came to buying books

Pride of place in his library was "Scotland And The French Revolution" written by Henry W Meikle a lecturer in Scottish History at ~~Glasgy~~ Edinburgh University

This book was first published in 1912 and the copy in ~~Harry's~~ his possession was a first edition.

(5)

Former Prime Minister Harold Wilson could certainly talk big. Readers will remember his technological revolution that disappeared in white heat. His vanity was beyond belief but never matched his intellect. When he was putting it about that he was a sort of guru of economics someone asked him what he thought of Karl Marx and Capital.

To the astonishment of the questioner Wilson said he read three chapters and gave it up. After this Harry was to describe Wilson as the laziest man in town. [At the same time Morgan Phillips, Secretary of the Labour Party was claiming Methodism as a superior philosophy to Marxism]

This for Harry was positive proof of Labour's bankruptcy. He was to say no knowledge, no ideas, no idealism, just middling capitalist politicians.

But he was not averse to criticising Communist Party leaders deficient in the little grey cells. On such leader was Peter Kerrigan who was unique in one respect. After serving his time as an engineer, never worked again. He was appointed a full time organizer with the Communist Party when a callow youth.

Harry had this to say about him "The only trouble wi' Peter Kerrigan was, he had even less brains than Mascton. He always knew the Party line, and he could carry through the Party line. He carried out every instruction very carefully

[over

7

"Thats what Pollitt liked about him, he always carried out the instructions"

Harry M'Shane left school at an early age with not much of an education. After that he educated himself and made a good job of it. Of course in this he was not alone. Men like the Socialist Willie Nairne the Novelist and Poet Patrick M'Gill, John S Clarke and countless others.

Of all politicians, he loathed Margaret Thatcher. In Harry's view she was a charlatan who debased everything she touched. When it came to reading and knowledge it was nothing but Government papers. He used to laugh at her claims to be a modernist when she deigned to board a railway train, and hardly ever entered a theatre.
Her quoting of Francis of Assisi and her attacks on the Church and Churchmen left him cold. The truth is that he had forgot more about religion than she ever knew.
He didn't hate Thatcher just because she was a Tory. There was more to it than that.

From time to time he was to say complimentary things about some conservative leaders. Balfour he thought quite courageous in making a sceptical speech at Glasgow University on religion.

Alec Douglas Home had a tubercular infection, spending a long stint confined to bed. Home spent his time reading the Communist Manifesto and some other writings of Marx and Engels. He did it to understand what the other side was thinking. This, Harry found commendable, also two speeches by Harold M'Millan;

One made in Africa prophesying the Wind of change, and the other debunking the Russians outlandish view of the Britain was still Dickensian.

over

He strongly believed that reading was also for pleasure but learning by rote an abomination

Harry McShane was certainly a scholar and a gentleman

In 1958 a book was published in America called Marxism and Freedom, — written by Raya Dunayevskaya who when a young women had served Leon Trotsky as his secretary when exiled in Mexico.

The preface was by the French Marxist Herbert Marcuse

Harry read the book and was enthralled by its conceptions and conclusions.

To him this was Marxism with the cobwebs and trappings surrounding dogma swept away. The book became a best seller in Socialist circles throughout the world

By 1971 it was into a second edition with a new preface written by Harry McShane.

At the end of this book we have published in full the preface. In the second paragraph he wrote; – "The publication of Marxism and Freedom marks a departure from the dull and stereotyped material sent out by those who seek to be regarded as the authorised custodians of Marxist wisdom. Raya Dunayevskaya has produced a work that will be of great service to all who are ready to involve themselves in the struggle for a free and humane society"

Harry M'Shane was an active Socialist when the Russian revolution took place, - and welcomed it with open arms. An event that held out so much promise was to turn in to a nightmare. What went wrong? Leaving a party that he had been a member of for 31 years was traumatic in itself. The Khruschev disclosures shook him to his stocking soles. It seemed to him that what the capitalist press had said about the notorious Moscow trials / about the camps, about dictatorship was true.
The Hungarian Revolution, and the plot against the Jewish Doctors confirmed his belief that there was something rotten in the state of Russia.

He turned his attention to the harsh realities of workers lives inside the Soviet Union. The Trade Unions were not their own. Strikes were banned. The more they produced the greater the shortages of food. Dissention ended up in The Lubyanka and the Gulag. Surplus value earned by the workers was syphoned of to pay for a rediculous massive Military machine, and the State pocketed the rest. Harry saw this as Capitalism with a vengeance. Marx, Engels and to some extent Lenin were being used in a great cover up. Socialism had no foothold in Russia.

Meanwhile he began to read again the lives of those who warned about the coming eclipse of Marxism in Russia. There was Angelica Balbanof from Italy, Rosa Luxembourg from Germany, Emma Goldmann from America, and Madame Kollontai from the Soviet Union

His horizons became wider and wider. An anthology of articles on aspects of Marxism had been published on the continent, — and eventually translated into english. An article by Maximilien Rubel entitled "Reflections on Utopia And Revolution" chimed in with his thoughts at that time

(11)

There was a striking passage in Rubel's article that engaged Harry's mind.

"Marx did not abolish utopia. On the contrary he rejuvenated it and enlarged its scope. With him, utopia becomes one single movement in two stages. Revolution - Creation. Before Marx the utopians thought and imagined creation independently from the very men who were supposed build the new city. Man was Marx's first and foremost concern.

"We know that for the new fangled forces of society to work well they only need to be mastered by the new fangled men, such are the working men.

This last quotation was from a speech made by Marx at the Anniversary of the Peoples Paper 14th April 1856.

In 1956 Ronald Meek who
was a lecturer in Political
economy at Glasgow University
had published a book; Studies
In The Labour Theory of Value.
By this time Meek had left
the Communist Party.
Later he wrote an interesting
pamphlet on the Scottish
contribution to Marxist
thought, covering the
thoughts and writings of
Adam Smith, and Adam
Ferguson. There were
others like Miller.
Meek made the connection
with the ideas of Marx
This sort of writing and
thinking was down Harry's
street

At 90 years of age Harry McShane
was proclaiming with confidence
"The only people that can talk
about a future are Marxists
and we shouldnt be ashamed
to say so"

Ten years before that he was
writing; "Marxist thought is
about the future of man and
takes us far beyond the aims
of the existing reformist parties
Marxist theory seeks realisation
in the self activity of the masses"

This was the philosophy he
embraced as a young Clydeside
engineer and it stayed with
him to the day he shuffled
of this mortal coil

When he joined the Communist Party in 1922 it had a valid pedigree as a Marxist Party When he left it in 1953 it had lost its credibility, deserting class struggle politics for the Parliamentary road to Socialism. His latter years in the CP were spent in dissappointment and betrayals of the worst kind

It had become an adjunct of the Russian Communist Party and the high hopes of 1917 had crumbled into the dust. But this calamity did not sap or alter his belief in revolutionary Socialism He scorned the cynics who were saying Marx was out of date Future events were to prove him right.

His enemies excelled themselves with slanders and dirty tricks

One day he was said to have went into the Catholic Church and the next to have made common cause with the Capitalist Press. — Offers were made to him to join the Labour Party. Such offers he spurned. He was to say that he had left a Labour Party not to join another one.

As the years rolled on the Socialist Workers Party and Militant would have dearly loved him if he had signed on their dotted line. He took the view that Socialism was not the sole preserve of parties

④

The world did not turn upside down. But it was spinning and tilting with revolution and revolt. There was the Hungarian revolution of 1956, Uprisings in Poland and East Germany. Students revolted in Paris and Russia was bursting at the seams. Here in Britain Toxteth and Bristol and Brixton were aflame with dissent.

The miners strike of 1984-85 smashed the dream of a neutral state. Or for that matter a peaceful road to Socialism.

Thatcher reigned in her bunker at Number ten while unemployment figures hit the roof.

It started at a Million, and steadily rose, eclipsing the hungry thirties

EARLY DAYS OF SOC MOVEMENT
MANY OF LEADING FIGURES WERE
ENGINEERS , HIS CLOSE FRIENDS
TOM MANN AN WAL HANNINGTON
WERE ENGINEERS

HARRY M'SHANE GOOD AT HIS JOB

x QUOTE CHIEF FOREMAN GOING TO HIS
BOSS RECOMMENDING ME BE SACKED.
BOSS WOULD HERE NONE OF IT

WORKING TO FINE LIMITS, ON SURFACE
TABLE STRIPPING AND ASSEMBLING
PUMPS, HIS FORTE. ———

HARRY M'SHANE NO STICK IN THE
MUD ———

1928 HEARD CALL OF THE
WILD SEES TREADGOLD - GOES
TO THE KLONDYKE.

WHEN HE GOT THERE MAD RUSH
FOR THE ELUSIVE GOLD HAD TAPERED
OFF ——— ON DAWSON CITY
THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO
BE, ESKIMO NELL GONE, DAN M'GREW
SHOT ———

JUST (2)
MISSED ROBERT SERVICE
MEETING !!

HAD CERTAIN AFFINITY WITH
SERVICE — QUOTE BOTH PAID
VISITS WHEN IN RUSSIA TO
ATHEIST MUSEUM AND LENINS
MAUSOLEUM

He did meet ONE PROSPECTOR
WHO Had in His CABIN A TRUNK
FULL OF SOCIALIST LITERATURE
KERR PUBLICATION, DANIEL De
LEON ETC

Capitalism never took the blame. Absurd quacks like Tebbit blamed the workers. His solution get of your backside, take your bike, and seek work. Tragedy had turned to farce when Thatcher toured a factory in the Midlands. After her visit the place closed down. Tories, Capitalists and Labour leaders had no answer. Michael Foot could only sing as he wrung his hands, we will have to live with mass unemployment.

During this period Harry McShane with pen and voice was putting the blame at the right door — the 'Capitalist System'

①

Like those of us who left the CP in 1953, — we supported wrong policies. - Harry was no exception

It took us a long time to see through the myth of Russia being a Socialist State. Critics of Russia inside the CP were told being anti-Soviet means being anti-Socialist — the fact that the British CP never once criticysed Russian foreign policy indicates the depth that party had sunk to.

We were fed on a diet of falsification of history about CP of Soviet Union — and that fatuous absurdity written by the Dean of Canterbury The Socialist Sixth of the World.

②

The Myth Shattering Revelations By Khruschev put paid to all that, — But By this time Harry had left the C.P.

By the 1950s the Party that he had joined in 1922 was changing out all recognition

I have always thought you had to be inside the CP to really know what it was like.
The rule was Democratic Centralism, where the Membership never really got to know if there was a minority vote against certain decisions.

It is not generally known that he was threatened with expulsion during his NUWM days —

(3)

In his last years inside CP. Splits began to emerge here, and in Austalia and France. Splits centred around a Policy 'Document proclaiming that socialism can be won in this country by the ballot box, – by peaceful means.

The class struggle and the role played by the capitalist state was played down.

The Russians officially say that The British Road to Socialism was framed and articulated by one, Joseph Stalin.

(4)

Harry Fought The Ideas about The British Road To Socialm With Vigour A leading light in CP Circles at That Time was a Man Called Jim Hill, He had Been an Industrial Organizer, Then Secretary of Glasgow Trades Council, — and wait for it a Probation Officer — Hill Said all You Need To Know about Marxism is Contained in The British Road To Socialism —

For His Efforts He was Taken of The Party list of Speakers When He left CP They attacked Him With Venom, Saying he had Returned To The Catholic Church and a lackey of The Capitalist Press.

He Survived, They didn't

After leaving CP Harry began to read again the lives and ideas of those who were warning long ago that the Russian Revolution was being betrayed – and prophesying the eclipse of Marxism in that country –

Among those writers were Angelica Balabanoff from Italy, Luxembourg from Germany, Emma Goldman from America, Madame Kollontai from the Soviet Union and Victor Serge who eventually resided in France

At 90 years of age Harry McShane proclaimed with confidence "The only people who can talk about a future are Marxists and shouldn't be ashamed to say so"

10 years before, when 80 he wrote. "Marxist thought is about the future of man and takes us far beyond the aims of the existing reformist parties. Marxist theory seeks realisation in the self activity of the masses"

This was the philosophy he embraced even before 1922, and it stayed with him to the day he shuffled of this mortal coil.

In 1958, Raya Dunayevskaya's Book. — Marxism and Freedom was first published, ——
Meeting Harry at that time you would have found him all excited, he would say that he had found new insights into Marx's ideas and horizons. He was so full of bounce, you would have thought he was on his way ——————————— to Utopia

At this time he had just read an article written in a French journal by Maxim Rubel Rubel argued "that Marx did not abolish Utopia he rejuvenated it and enlarged its scope, with him Utopia, becomes one single movement in two stages —— Revolution and creation.

= Entitled "Reflections on Utopian and Revolution

/over

Before Marx the Utopians thought and imagined creation independently from the very men who were to build the new city. Man was Marx's first and foremost concern" ——

Harry thought there was a connection between Marx and Scotland. His mind looked backwards to 1724 to 1816, the life span of Scots philosopher Adam Fergusson.

Fergusson was a son of the manse, educated in Perth, and deputy chaplain to the Black Watch. He eventually became professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University.

In "The Poverty of Philosophy" Marx had expressed a favourable comment about Fergusson.

ADAM FERGUSSON PUBLISHED AN ESSAY, "THE HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY" — ALSO A PAMPHLET ON AMERICAN REVOLUTION OPPOSING BRITISH POINT OF VIEW

IN "HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY" FERGUSSON SAID:

"THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND IS NOT THE APES, BUT MAN. HE IS IN SHORT A MAN IN EVERY CONDITION AND WE CAN LEARN NOTHING FROM THE ANOLOGY OF OTHER ANIMALS.

AT THIS TIME THE EMPHASIS WAS ON STUDYING ANIMALS — AND RELATING THEM TO MAN

SURELY THIS, NOT A FAR CRY FROM MARX'S CONCERNS ABOUT MAN

SOME BOOKS OR NEW LINES OF THOUGHT FORMED LANDMARKS IN HARRY M'SHANES LIFE

RONALD MEEK A LECTURER ON POLITICAL ECONOMY HAD PUBLISHED A BOOK CALLED - "STUDIES IN THE LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE.

HE FOLLOWED THIS UP WITH A BOOKLET - THE SCOTTISH CONTRIBUTION TO MARXIST THOUGHT, WHICH INCLUDED STUDIES OF SMITH, FERGUSSON, AND JOHN MILLAR. RONALD MEEK LEFT THE COMMUNIST PARTY

HARRY WARMED TO CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SMITHS THOUGHT, AND HIS LIFE. HE RELENTLESSLY ATTACKED THE DISTORTION MADE BY THE TORIES AND FRIEND IN THE "ADAM SMITH INSTITUTE"

(over

SMITH SPEAKS WITH DISDAIN
OF MERCHANTS AND MANUFACTURERS
" MEAN RAPACITY, MONOPOLISING
SPIRIT - WHO SHOULD NEVER
BECOME OR ALLOWED TO RULE
MANKIND. CIVIL GOVERNMENT
SO FAR AS IT IS INSTITUTED
FOR THE SECURITY OF PROPERTY
- IS IN REALITY INSTITUTED
FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE RICH
AGAINST THE POOR - OR OF
THOSE WHO HAVE SOME PROPERTY
- OR HAVE NONE AT ALL"

HARRY BEING A FREETHINKER
SYMPATHISED WITH SMITH'S
NON-RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

AT GLASGOW UNIVERSITY, NEVER
ENGAGED IN PRAYERS BEFORE
CLASSES BEGAN.
SMITH STOOD BY DAVID HUME
WHEN HE WAS PILLORIED BY
THE CHURCH.

FROM FAMOUS SCOTS BY FORBES M'GREGOR
AND LIB.

ADAM FERGUSSON 1724-1816 1724-1816

BORN LOGIERAIT, PERTHSHIRE
SON OF THE MANSE EDUC - PERTH
UNIV. ST AND + EDIN. APP. DEP CHAPLAIN
TO BLACK WATCH. FOUGHT WITH BL WTCH
AT BLOODY BTTLE OF FONTENOY - 1745

EVENTUALLY LEFT ARMY - BECAME SUCCESSOR
TO DAVID HUME AS LIBRARIAN OF ADVOCATES
LIBRARY, EDIN. WAS TUTOR TO LORD BUTES
FAMILY — APP PROF. NAT. PHIL AT
EDIN — ALSO "PNEUMATICS" [MENTAL
PHILOS.]

PUB. ESSY HIS. OF CIVIL SOC
WROTE A PAMPHLET ON AM. REVOL
DID NOT SUPPORT BR GOVT'S VIEW
1783 PUB. BK ON ROMAN REPUBLIC
SEVERAL EDITIONS - THIS BEFORE
GIBBON'S DECLINE + FAL 1788
LAST WORK = PRINCIPLES OF MORAL AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

ADAM FERGUSON

FROM PETER GAY "THE ENLIGHTENMENT AN INTERPRETATION"

B/SDEN LIBRARY

"WE SPEAK OF ART AS DISTINGUISHED FROM NATURE, BUT ART ITSELF IS NATURAL TO MAN" HE IS IN SOME MEASURE THE ARTIFICER OF HIS OWN FRAME, AS WELL AS HIS FORTUNE"

FROM = "AN ESSAY ON THE HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY".

QUOTES FROM ABOVE.

"A WILD MAN CAUGHT IN THE WOODS, WHERE HE HAD ALWAYS LIVED APART FROM HIS SPECIES, IS A SINGULAR INSTANCE, NOT A SPECIMEN OF ANY GENERAL CHARACTER"

HIST OF CIVIL SOC. 5-6

"THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND IS NOT THE APES, BUT MAN. IT WAS FROM SUCH DISCUSSIONS THAT THE MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCES WERE TO DEVELOP.

"HE IS IN SHORT A MAN IN EVERY CONDITION AND WE CAN LEARN NOTHING FROM THE ANALOGY OF OTHER ANIMALS"

THIS WAS AT A TIME WHEN EMPHASIS WAS ~~ON~~ STUDYING ANIMALS, AND RELATING THEM TO MAN.

Harry never got carried away with extravagant claims for the Scottish Enlightenment. He recognised that men like Smith and Fergusson were bound by the development of the society they lived in. I can well remember him taken exception to claims being made by Communist Party pundits, that Robert Burns was a Communist ——————

Although a confirmed atheist for almost a lifetime, it did not dampen his interest in the Scottish Reformation

Outside, and inside the Mitchell library, studied this momentous period in Scottish history

All The Characters appearing in This Momentous Drama, He Spoke of in a knowledgeable Fashion, Knox, Mary Queen of Scots, Wishart, Beaton, Luther and Calvin
Knox's Papal adversaries He Kent Well

He Took his Studies a Stage Further By going Further

Sir David Lyndsays Satire "The "Three Estates" Had Been an outstanding Success
This was a Biting attack on The Church

Harry Saw The Glasgow Lord Provost, and Urged Him To Bring The Show To Glasgow That He did, it was Put on at Saint Andrews Halls and Well Received By Packed audiences

I CONFESS THERE IS MUCH THAT I HAVE LEFT OUT — HIS YEARS AS A JOURNALIST, HIS PERIOD WHEN HE EDITED THE SOCIALIST WORKERS FEDERATION PAPER "SOCIALIST REVOLT".

BUT IN THIS AUDIENCE THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN ADD TO AND SUPPLEMENT WHAT I HAVE SAID ABOUT HARRY McSHANE.

ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH AND SUBSEQUENT DAYS AFTER TRIBUTES WERE PAID IN THE MEDIA, AND THE NATIONAL PRESS

ONE OF THE MOST MOVING TRIBUTES, I READ WAS BY PAUL FOOT IN THE SOCIALIST WORKER

Paul Foot;

He died in an old peoples home, He left a few books to his friends, He had survived on his pension almost without supplement, for the last 28 years of his life. He never had any property, yet he was perhaps the most contented man I have ever met, utterly happy as long as he was fighting for his class - - - -

"He was, is and will be an inspiration and example to us all"

Went to Klondike — 1928
37 yrs. of age.

START OF GOLD RUSH 1897 - 1898

= REWRITE KLONDIKE PIEC

= Never suffered any Hardship

= POSSIBLE REASON FOR GOING

= VICTIMISATION? was already well known

Klondike Madness Had died
X down when he got there

X never had it rough

X How long did he stay there?

(1) Committed Marxist to his dying day

(2) Revelations of the mind

x From Catholicism to Marxism

x Days in the CP. trying to keep mind over the dead hand interpretation of Marxism

x Leaving the CP. Shaking of the truth Raya Dunayevskaya opens his windows

x Goes back to the essential Marx Alienation, Humanism, Utopian Socialists [RUBEL] Quote

x Socialist belief without being in a Party

x Searches where the CP went all wrong

x Sees ~~th~~ through the eyes of Goldman, Kollontai Luxembourg, Balbanof. and others

over

(1) Scathing attacks on BR
RD TO Socialism

(2) Examines Russian System
Finds worker-relations
same as Boss-worker
relations under capitalism

(3) Re reads Trotsky
Finds Fromm of great
interest links Freud
with Marx on social
Questions and Society

(4) Back to VOL (1) of
Capital - and a
fresh new estimate
of Willie Nairn

There is a general impression of Harry McShane that his fame rested with his position of an unemployed workers leader in the hungry thirties — This is a pure caricature of what he thought what he did and stood for. It has to be remembered that he started out in life a catholic. who in his teens was ardent and zealous in defending his faith

His first contact with Socialists came through attending their meetings, and challenging their beliefs

Harry was well read in scriptures. he had some knowledge of Papal Bull, the encyclicals that were proclaimed from Rome from time to time.

In 1951, on a dreich December day, thousands of building workers are pouring into Glasgow's George Square.

Later hundreds of them are to rush the main door of Glasgow

(2)

The Socialists he discovered
were formidable opponents
with ~~exposures~~ of a class
ridden society
who promised ~~some~~ some sort of
heaven on earth.

Miracles they argued were
useless in putting the
~~machinery~~ ravages of capitalism

Harry McShane would go home
to think again.

His conversion to Socialism
was dramatic and deep

Now on the other side
his former fellow catholics
were to suffer for being
false prophets.

Freethought literature
he took to like a magnet
An avid reader of ~~of the~~
founding fathers of the freethought
movement. Ralph Ingersoll
and Chapman Cohen.

③

Main priority of the Labour Party was building rented houses, with private building playing a minor role.

Published figures for 1947 indicated that Glasgow needed 100,000 new homes. By 1951 this target was far from reached. The queues on the waiting list seemed endless.

A Glasgow Baillie

(3)

After forming the CP in 1922?
he had ~~two~~ visits to Russia
but was not impressed
when visiting an atheist
Museum. He thought the
anti-God propaganda
was crude and would
have an adverse effect
in dispelling religious
superstition

Christian Socialists like Conrad
Noel, George M'Leod and Geoff
Shaw won his admiration.

In his later years he was
to win the respect of his
religious opponents

After debating with Thomas
Archbishop Winning praised
his knowledge of history ~~of scripture~~
concerning the Catholic Church

Turner

③

~~It would take a superhuman effort to satisfy Glasgow's housing hunger.~~

~~The Labour Party's main priority was to build council houses for~~

Religion

His approach to churchmen and women was not hang dog. If the ecclesiastics could throw their cot with the Socialist movement he welcomed them with open arms

But Harry made no compromising. His belief in Marxism stayed with him from his days of conversion in Glasgow's South side until his death ———

During the war years he was
Scottish Correspondent for
the Daily Worker, and remained
in this post until 1952.

His reports covered a wide
gamut ranging from the
crofters seizure at Knoydart,
to unmasking cruel and dirty
deeds taking place inside
the Polish Army Camps in
Scotland.

Latterly he became a doyen
among industrial Journalists
A kenspeckle figure on the
Conference circuit.

Over the years he had
[illegible]ilt up a wide network
[illegible]cts inside the Labour
[illegible]ent. Being privy
[illegible]e information enabled
[illegible]ll of a few scoops

Never selfish with his knowledge, sharing and helping many a gentleman of the press get over a difficult style

He was a respected member of the National Union of Journalists Contemporaries like Jack House Alistair Dunnett, John Hossack, and Cliff Hanley enjoyed his company.

Municipal affairs fascinated him particularly the question of Glasgow Housing.

He was well known at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh, When Hector McNeill was Labours Secretary of State for Scotland, he would from time to time give Harry advance information ahead of the field

His last big stories as journalist came in 1951, reporting the agitation and strikes against the sale of council houses at Merrylee in Glasgow's South Side

By this time he had become disenchanted with the Communist Party. Behind the scenes he was having a running battle with the leaders

Even while he was still a member of the C.P. was removed from the Daily Worker position

His replacement a yes woman from England and a Yes man from Scotland. But he was not alone. Some time later Peter Fryer resigned over suppression of his despatches from the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

(4)

After leaving the Communist Party in 1953, Forward the Socialist weekly engaged him, to write a series of articles

When Billy Graham the American evangelist came to the Kelvin Hall in 1955 Harry was to write what was ~~perhaps~~ his ~~his~~ the "best article of his reporters career" headed "Theres No Business Like Show Business

Writing for the Press was so different in those days Word Processors, discs, tape recorders and researchers were not the tools of the trade It was the pencil and the Notebook and the typewriter and you considered yourself equipped if you could do Pitmans shorthand .

(5)

Harry could type and he could do a bit of shorthand. But he always thought that style was the essence and all important. So he ~~In his literary~~ would study many books covering literary composition. His newspaper training never left him. He was just as meticulous preparing a four page duplicated news bulletin for the Socialist Workers Federation. It was called "The New Commune" and under Harry's guidance it was to publish stories the others hadn't got. First in the field with the sensational disclosures by Kruschev and the state of Russia under Stalin

Lenins Last Will and Testament warning of terrible dangers that could come to Mother Russia if Stalin had his way and took the tiller

The Communist Party here and elsewhere had knowledge of this document; — but kept it under wraps.

The New Commune published it in full.

Out of the tiny New Commune was born a bigger, better and brighter paper called Revolt. Once again Harry was in his element writing himself and encouraging others

①

Harry M'Shane was an Engineer
to Trade — and Proud of his Craft
Early Days of Socialist Movement
— Many Leading Figures were
Engineers, — Tom Mann and Wal Hannington

He was good at his Job, —
On his Position He had to Be
On one occassion a Head Foreman Recomended To
his Boss That Harry Be Sacked
Because he was an agitator
The Boss left The Foreman With
a Flea in his ear Claiming That
Harry was The Best Man he
Had working on The Shop Floor

When a Shop Steward Played a Part
in a Strike at Weirs of Cathcart
Harry M'Shane was Scornful of
Today's Procedure of Postal Ballots
He Thought The only Thing They
did was To Warn The Enemy in
advance.

Harry M'Shane was no stick in the muds who hung around in the same place until retirement and a gold watch

The wanderlust came over him he set out for the Klondike, the long way, sailing to Canada.

This came about through seeing an advert in the national press seeking qualified engineers

He answered this call of the wild in 1928

The man who was to become Harry's boss was a man called Treadgold - a larger than life character, who had been in Dawson City and the Klondike in 1897 and 1898.

His JOB was TO LOOK AFTER MINING MACHINERY.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF 1928 WAS SO DIFFERENT FROM 1898 DAWSON CITY WAS NOT THE SAME HE COULD'NT WHOOP IT UP IN THE MALMUTE SALOON. ESKIMO NELL HAD GONE AWAY, DAN M'GREW HAD ALREADY BEEN SHOT AND CREMATED

ROBERT SERVICE THE CREATOR OF THOSE UNFORGETABLE CHARACTERS HAD SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH HARRY M'SHANE. BOTH HAD BEEN TO RUSSIA TWICE, BOTH HAD VISITED LENINS MAUSOLEUM, — AND THE MUSEUM OF ATHEISM, AND BOTH OF THEM DIDN'T LIKE WHAT THEY SAW.

Harry Thought The atheist Museum was a Travesty of Atheism wrapped up in Crude Propaganda

Service after Paying his Entrance Money at The Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square, gazed on The Embalmed Body, Turned away From The Frozen Corpse, with a Feeling That Something indecent had Been done

and Then Wrote:

Poor Lenin Lies, I Pitied Him
How Wearily He watches Pass
The Pallid Proletariat
What Did He do To Suffer That)

Although Harry Missed By a week or so Seeing Service, He Did Meet and Team up With a Prospector of Socialist Outlook.

HARRY RECALLS A VISIT TO HIS CABIN. SEVERAL TRUNKS WERE STUFFED WITH CHARLES KERR PUBLICATIONS. KERR THE PUBLISHER WAS THE BIGGEST SELLER OF SOCIALIST LITERATURE IN THE WORLD

x Decades later HARRY was TO RETURN TO THIS PART OF THE WORLD, ~~To~~ LECTURE TO STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

FACTS

PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871

WAS FIRST WORKERS STATE
FIRST DECREE – ABOLITION OF THE STANDING ARMY.
"THE ARMED PEOPLE SMASHED PARLIAMENTARIANISM. PEOPLES ASSEMBLY NOT TO BE A PARLIAMENTARY TALKING SHOP – BUT A WORKING BODY
THE SHAM INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY WAS ELIMINATED — JUDGES TO BE ELECTED, AND SUBJECT TO RECALL.
PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMED AT A WORKMANS WAGE
DECREE PASSED SEPARATING CHURCH AND STATE. RELIGIOUS CONTROL OF EDUCATION ABOLISHED
EDUCATION TO BE FREE FOR ALL

FACTS: RUSSIAN REVOLUTION 1917

WORKERS CREATE SOVIETS, OR COUNCILS
COUNCIL WERE SPONTANEOUS OUTBURSTS
BY BROAD MASSES OF THE PEOPLE
MENSHEVIKS AND BOLSHEVIKS
JOINED THEM AFTER THEY HAD
BEEN CREATED BY THE WORKERS
SOCIALIST UNDERGROUND TAKEN
BY SURPRISE

ALAS ALL THE HIGH HOPES
SACRIFICES, AND ENDEAVOURS WERE
DASHED WHAT WAS MEANT TO
BE THE FIRST STAGES OF SOCIALISM
ENDED UP AS STATE CAPITALISM

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA WAS
SAYING THIS WAY BACK IN 1945
"RUSSIAN COMMUNISM RESTS ON
THE (MAIN) MAINSPRING OF CAPITALISM
PAYING THE WORKER THE MINIMUM
AND EXTRACTING FROM HIM THE MAXIMUM"

FACTS ③

EAST GERMAN UPRISING OF JUNE 1953

GERMAN WORKERS STRIKE AGAINST INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS IN FACTORIES

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DOWN TOOLS GO ON PROTEST MARCH AGAINST THE SPEED UP

STATE RAIL WORKERS WALK OUT

25,000 WORKERS AT LEUNA CHEMICAL PLANT SET PLANT ON FIRE

STRIKERS OPEN PRISONS AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS, SET FREE POLITICAL PRISONERS

5,000 URANIUM MINERS JOIN THE STRIKES.

JULY 1953 TEN THOUSAND MINERS STRIKE INSIDE SLAVE LABOUR CAMPS AT VORKUTA SIBERIA ———

THEN CAME IN 1956, THE HUNGARIAN UPRISING.

In his autobiography "No Mean Fighter", Harry McShane told the story of his life from the day of his birth, May 1891, up to 1953, the year he left the Communist Party. Towards the end of the book, makes some mention of the years after, — but it was cursory

He lived for another 35 years, which in the opinion of the authors were perhaps the best years of his life

As far back as August 1909, he joined the I.L.P., after some time, left it to join the British Socialist Party. Before he threw in his lot with the new emergent Communist Party in 1922, Harry McShane was already a confirmed revolutionary Socialist, and Marxist.

Many who left the Communist Party after the trauma of Hungary, sought solace by joining the Labour Party, or disappeared into the limbo of trade union officialdom. Some just stopped doing anything political, crawled into the woodwork, slid down the parapet into oblivion.

Harry M'Shane was of sterner stuff. He faced the reality of awkward facts. He donned his thinking cap, — going back to the early writings of Karl Marx, when a young humanist, and the older Marx who wrote Capital, Volumes One to Three

Despite what had happened in Russia after the 1917 Revolution, he never had any regrets about welcoming that earth shattering event, when it occurred, Harry, always thought that the American journalist John Reed had it right when he called it "Ten Days that Shook the World"
Like his colleague at that time, John McLean, — saw it as a great uprising from below

But by 1953, he knew it had gone all wrong the aspirations and hopes engendered by the Revolution were betrayed. How this came to pass he set about finding out, by reading the lives and opinions of some early Revolutionaries who had been there. They were sending out warning signals, laced with predictions, as to what was likely to happen inside the Soviet Union, if the rot wasn't stopped.

Harry M'Shane as well as being a thinker was a practical man. Along with the late Eric Heffer, and other kindred spirits, formed an organization called The Socialist Workers Federation, while at the same time launching a paper, "Socialist Revolt"

The S.W.F was not a political party. Those connected with it had no high or grandiose ambitions, except preaching socialist propaganda, either by word or mouth.

"Forward" the Socialist Weekly opened its columns to him, and for a while was a regular contributor

All his life he relished the challenge of debate. In later years took on Catholic Archbishop Winning, as well as Lord Boyle, Minister for Education

He spoke to a gathering of the legal fraternity on the subject of "Marxism and the Law".

Up and down the country he was much in demand as a platform speaker, – speaking at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and the Albert Hall, London. On those occasions, spoke about unemployment

Down through the years, Harry M'Shane had an affinity with the Irish People, and their problems At Glasgow's Woodside Halls, shared the platform with Bernadette Devlin.

When well over ninety years of age enthralled an audience at Strathclyde University His subject that evening, – "The Significance of May Day", this was to be his last platform appearance

On The Cover of This Book We Say That Harry M'Shane was The Last Clydesider

His Cotemporaries, John M'Lean, Maxton, Gallacher, Wheatley, Neil M'Lean, Shinwell, Tom Johnston, John S Clarke and Guy Alared Had passed away Long Before Harry Shuffled of This Mortal Coil

With all Their Faults And Weaknesses They Represented an era of defiance Towards The Capitalist System. Press and Politicians Referred To it as The Red Clyde Perhaps This accolade was a Bit Overdone. What The Socialist Movement did Then, And What it does Now is As Contrasting as Night and Day

This Book is About a Remarkable Man, who Sought neither Fame or Fortune Property or Wealth, — But Found Happiness Fighting For His Class.

Although a confirmed atheist for almost a lifetime it, did not dampen Harry McShane's interest in the Reformation. He studied this most momentous period in Scottish history in all its aspects. All the characters appearing in this ~~great~~ epic drama, he spoke of intimately.

John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots, Wishart and Cardinal Beaton. The european dimension, Luther, and Calvin and their papal adversaries he knew well. But the pity is that he put nothing down in writing

This period in history is not ~~with all~~ its biased and one sided accounts

WITHOUT =

How appropriate that the friends of Harry M'Shane should meet here today to scatter his ashes.

To Socialists of Yesteryear, this was indeed hallowed ground. The Chartists spoke here. Willie Nairne, Bob Hutchison, Bruce Glazier, and John F Armour pioneers of the first Socialist Organization in Glasgow the S.D.F. campaigned and fought for the right of "free speech" on this green sward.

In those heady days Socialists would call it the University on the Green. Surely Harry McShane was one of its brightest students

In 1892 the Unemployed Gathered Here
demanding work and full maintanance
40 Years on Harry McShane gathered once again with
the Unemployed demanding work and full
maintamance
In 1891 the first May Day Demonstration
was held held here

(2)

It was here that John M'Lean, Jimmy Maxton and Willie Gallacher denounced the misery of Capitalism And it was here that Harry M'Shane and Guy Aldred had to fight once again for the right to speak Before the 2ND World war Harry and thousands of Glasgow Workers fought a pitched battle with Mosley and his thugs The Fascists retreated from the "Green" with a bloody nose.

2

John

x In later years the U.C.S workers gathered here in protest.

Harry was a soap box man, a street corner orator. At Fleshers Haugh, Jail Square, or Nelson's monument he chronicled the annals of Glasgow's poor. He fought against evictions he sided with the homeless against authority. he exposed sub-let racketeers.

Harry McShane was a Marxist to the core, and recognised that the poor will always be with us, as long as capitalism is with us

His politics however were not of the parish pump His roots were Scottish and he never forgot that

[A reporter from the "New Yorker" said of Harry:– "a rugged scot with a rebellious face"]

Harry was at Knoydart along with Hugh McDiarmid when demobbed servicemen seized back their land.

James Barke the eminent Scots
Novelist he counted as a friend
He was over the moon when Jimmie
Barke wrote his famous novels
about Robert Burns like many
Socialists of his generation his
favourite poet was Rabbie
This is not the last act of remembrance,
Just as he fought for the right of
free speech on his favourite Glasgow
Green, those of us gathered here may
yet have to fight against the encroachments
of yuppiedom and property developers who
would destroy this dear green place.

[This is not a last goodbye] Harry always regretted the failure of the Labour Movement to honour its pioneers and unsung heroes. Those of us who were his friends have a great opportunity to redress the balance.

Harry McShane — you built better than you knew.

Adam Ferguson, born in Perthshire
(1723 - 1816)

Chaplain to Black Watch
(February 1757)

He succeeded David Hume as keeper of Advocates Library in Edinburgh. Later became Professor of Natural Philosophy, and later, Professor of moral philosophy

Accompanied the young Earl of Chesterfield on travels on the continent

"Essay on History of Civil Society"
"Institute of Moral Philosophy"
History of Roman Republic."

Adam Smith - Biography by Dugald Stewart,
1733 - 1790.

NOTES ON ADAM FERGUSON

QUOTES CAPITAL VOL I

PAGE 334

REFERENCE TO DIVISION OF LABOUR "WE MAKE A NOTION OF HELOTS AND HAVE NO FREE CITIZENS" — FERGUSON

[HELOT = SERF — ANCIENT SPARTA]

"IT IS A RESULT OF THE DIVISION OF LABOUR IN MANUFACTURES, THAT THE LABOURER IS BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH THE INTELLECTUAL POTENCIES OF THE MATERIAL PROCESS OF PRODUCTION, AS THE PROPERTY OF ANOTHER, AND AS A RULING POWER." MARX P341

over

Ferguson "The former may have gained what the other has lost" ________

Wm Thompson puts it more starkly "An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution and Wealth. 1824

"The man of knowledge and the productive labourer come to be widely divided from each other, – and knowledge instead of remaining the handmaiden of labour in the hand of the labourer to increase his productive powers. ... has almost everywhere arrayed itself against labour ... systematically deluding ~~them~~ and leading them (the labourers) astray in order to render their muscular powers entirely mechanical and obedient"

Possible Headings

1. Changing Faith
2. The History Man.
3. Writing for the Worker
4. On the Soapbox
5. Always <u>with</u> Marx

There is a general impression of Harry M'Shane that his fame rested with his position as an unemployed leader

Lord Clanricarde

Glasgow Observer

22/April, 1966

Fabian Nationalism.

Glasgow Observer, 22/July/1966

4

Later in the day, the Magistrates accompanied by the military go out by Gallowgate to disperse weavers. A clash occurred between Parkhouse and the bridge crossing the Molendinar Burn at Drygate. The soldiers were ordered to shoot. Three men were killed on the spot, three died of wounds and others were wounded.

—

During the night and the following day there were

Garricks Temperance Coffee House

Meeting of Trades Delegates on 13th May.
object of meeting

"Taking into consideration the necessity of petitioning the authorities, both local and national, to assist in adopting some means whereby the wide-spread distress at present existing among the labouring classes of the community, may be mitigated by emigration or otherwise"

Glasgow Advertiser, May 15th

[illegible] on 3rd May).
Four on 5th May
Four executed on 9th May

14 shot and 2 pending

[illegible] declare for overthrow of the capitalist system of production for profit, and the establishment of a cooperative commonwealth, based on production for use, as the only solution for the poverty and unemployed problems; further this [illegible] sends its fraternal greetings to the workers of the world, pledging themselves to use every endeavour to effect the emancipation of labour from the domination of capitalism and landlordism, and in the interest of the solidarity of labour, we hereby declare in favour of the first day in May being held as a general holiday.

Sheeky – Steffington
Glasgow Herald
17th May,
11th May in Edinburgh
Jack Smith 18 months

The deterioration in the movement due to parliamentary - opportunism and desertion from the class struggle. Emphasised by the situation arising from the first world war.

To the workers the immediate aim of the Labour movement has not changed. There is a certain amount of cynicism among the workers.

The spontaneous movement cannot be ignored. The task of the Marxists is to give it guidance. The Marxists themselves must be organised in order to others

the Labour Party was formed, Will Thorne, representing the S.D.F wanted the conference to declare its belief in the class struggle. Keir Hardie bitterly opposed it. The "Labour Leader" the organ of the I.L.P. edited by Keir Hardie, never ceased its attacks on Marxism.

All this despite the fact that all the Social Democratic Parties had accepted Marxism.

The Labour Party did not accept the class struggle but after a fight it was admitted to membership of the second international

Scottish pre-Marxist writers

There is [illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible] is [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] is [illegible]

[illegible] been [illegible] but [illegible]

[illegible] from [illegible] of [illegible]

[illegible]

AT THE AGE OF 92 YEARS HE SAID " THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT CAN TALK ABOUT A FUTURE FOR MANKIND ARE MARXISTS AND SHOULD NOT BE ASHAMED TO SAY SO

HE ALSO SAID " I GET ANNOYED SOMETIMES ~~YOU KNOW~~ BECAUSE WE FORGET HOW STRONG WE ARE WE SHOULD BE CHALLENGING EVERY OTHER SCHOOL OF THOUGHT TO COME AND PUT THERE CARDS ON THE TABLE AND DEBATE WITH US

HE SAID I~~T MUST BE~~ MARXISM MUST BE RESURECTED FROM THE BOG OF FUTILITY AND OBSCURITY

INTO WHICH IT HAS BEEN PLACED
BY LEADERS WHO USE IT AS NOTHING
MORE THAN A LABEL

HARRY WAS ONE OF THE MOST
INFORMED PEOPLE IN THE LABOUR
MOVEMENT HIS READING OVER
THE ~~COUNTLESS~~ YEARS RANGED FROM
ADAM FERGUSON, ADAM SMITH
CARLYLE ~~AND~~ JOHN KNOX
AND HOSTS OF OTHERS
HE AMAZED EVERYONE AT
THE ADAM SMITH BI-CENTENARY
~~A FEW YEARS AGO~~ WHEN HE WAS OVER 80 BY CORRECTING
LORD BOYLE TORY MINISTER OF
EDUCATION | ON HIS STATEMENT ~~AND AMERICAN~~ ECONOMIST
J.K GALBRAITH SAID AT THAT

4 "IT TAKES A SCOTSMAN

<u>CATHERINE</u> TO UNDERSTAND A SCOTSMAN

HARRY ~~HE~~ ACCEPTED EVERY OPPORTUNITY
TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE ~~AND~~
WHETHER DEBATING WITH
ARCHBISHOP' WINNING,
LORD McLEOD, OR WRITING
TO THE HERALD OR THE
SCOTSMAN.

HE SOUGHT NO HONORS OR
POSITION IN THE MOVEMENT
HIS ONLY AIM WAS TO
SERVE THE WORKING CLASS

HE FERVENTLY BELIEVED
IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE
AND CORRESPONDED WITH
WORKERS ALL OVER THE
WORLD FROM IRELAND,
GERMANY, U.S.A. UP
UNTIL HE WAS UNABLE
TO DO SO.

WE MAY NEVER SEE
HIS LIKE AGAIN BUT
WE WERE ENRICHED
BY HIS PRESENCE

MODEST MAN
WHEN ASKED
TO DO PREFACE
HESITATED
THEN STATED
APOLOGISED
FOR NOT
HAVING
QUALIFICATION

ALL FOR THE CAUSE

24, Keystone Avenue
Milngavie.

Your Comments on Eric Heffer, saying he is an old age pensioner, and that Tony Benn will soon be one, I find offensive and insulting.
After all "Record proprietor" Maxwell is no spring chicken

Last of the Clydesiders Harry McShane when he was 80 years and more spoke to the Lawyers of Scotland with Lord Boyle right on Adam Smith

and was congratulated by J K Galbraith and Denis Healey — Archbishop Winning can testify to the tenacity and intelligence of this pensioner, having debated with McShane in Easterhouse. Benn a pensioner or ex-Viscount has nothing to do with the Challenge to Kinnock.

—

4

HE WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFORMED MEN IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT HIS READING AND STUDY RANGED FROM (ADAM FERGUSON) ADAM SMITH CARLYLE & JOHN KNOX QUOTE "

LAST THING

"

AT ADAM SMITH BI-CENTENARY

x IT TAKES A SCOTSMAN TO KNOW X

A SCOTSMAN

IN A DEBATE WITH ARCHBISHOP WINNING WHEN HARRY QUOTED THE RERUM NOVARUM THE ARCHBISHOP SAID HE HAD LEARNED SOMETHING FROM

HE SOUGHT NO HONOURS OR POSITIONS HIS ONLY AIM WAS TO SERVE THE WORKING CLASS

/ HE FERVENTLY BELIEVED IN THE CLASS. STRUGGLE

HE USED TO SAY THE STUDY OF HUMANITY WAS ONE OF THE OPPRESSED AGAINST THE OPPRESSOR

5/ AT 13 YEARS OF AGE HE MOVED A RESOLUTION AT A PACKED TORY ELECTION MEETING CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF JIM LARKIN WHO WAS JAILED FOR 5 YEARS DURING THE DUBLIN LOCK OUT ~~CA~~ WHEN HE ASKED THE TROOPS TO JOIN THE STRIKE.

~~A~~ TO THOSE OF US HE WERE PRIVILEGED

X TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY WAS AMAZING SENSE OF HUMOUR HE LOVE THE OLD SCOTTISH MUSIC HALL HE LIKED NOTHING BETTER THAN A FISH SUPPER WHICH HE CALLED A GOOD PROLETARIAN MEAL

ONE OF THE LAST THINGS HE QUOTED

J. F. ARMOUR

10.000

What must a writer do, to ingratiate himself with the establishment

~~How low can Cliff Hanley~~ go ~~get~~ to placate
the establishment by his attack on John McLean.
for the record he was not old he died at 44
after several periods of imprisonment for his
opposition to the first World War. x Hanleys
favourite socialist pioneer Tommy Moxton said ~~as~~ that John McLean
influenced him most and was responsible for his
conversion to Socialism. Hugh McDiarmid has
described John McLean as the greatest leader the
working class ever had, so amongst the socialist
who do not accept the new realism and have
not sold the pass John McLeans life is an
inspiration and will be for a long time.

Hugh McDiarmid said

x He died penniless and was buried by Trades Council

What must a writer do to ingratiate himself
with the establishment. Cliff Hanley by his attack
on John McLean reached a new low. For the record
he was not old he died at 44, and what kind of
politician serves several terms of imprisonment for his
principals dies penniless has to be buried by the
trades council and has over 10.000 at his funeral
One of Cliff Hanley favourite ~~T~~ socialist pioneers

While welcoming the obituary to Harry McShane that appeared in the Scottish Socialist Teachers paper there are a few inaccuracies that cannot go unchallenge.

It it is not correct that Harry McShane parted company with John McLean on the ~~S~~ nationalist issue Harry left to join the newly established communist party of Great Britain that had attracted most of the revolutionary Marxist in the labour movement at that time. Serious political differences did not exist between the two men and most certainly none of them were nationalists although John McLean latterly called for a Scottish Socialist Republic They had preached Marxism all their ~~of~~ lives and on this there was no compromise.

The second point was your assertion that he was in favour of Scottish independence once again this is untrue. He seen the imposition of right wing Thatcher policies on the Scottish workers without any electoral mandate and recognised there was a Scottish dimension that had to be ~~recognised~~ considered so he favoured a Scottish Assembly. One of the last letters he wrote was to Thatcher when he raised this point.

Finally I do not know if D. Owen ever met Harry ~~or~~ he most certainly did not know him because defeat and despair were words never in his vocabulary. He was the most optimistic person we have never known in the socialist movement. He never tired of telling young people that the Marxists have the only answers to the future of Mankind on this he never wavered

Notes on Adam Smith Institute

Douglas Mason Founder Member
of Right Wing St Andrews
Univ. Conserv. Club
(Became domestic Policy
adviser – Adam Smith
Institute)

Instit. set up 1977
Pub series of pamphlets

One – calling for Repeal
of Rent Act
Means Test for CCL Tenants
Sale of Existing CCL Houses
– Abolition of Local Authority
Housing

Insert P. 2 was a parody on the

(6)

On the front OF THIS BOOK WE CLAIM THAT HARRY M'SHANE WAS THE LAST CLYDESIDER.

HIS CONTEMPORARIES, JOHN M'LEAN, MAXTON, WHEATELY, SHINWELL, NEIL M'LEAN, TOM JOHNSTON, JOHN S CLARKE, and Guy Aldred

Insert P. 2

"I get annoyed sometimes you know, because we forget how strong we are. We should be challenging every other school of thought to come and put their cards on the table and debate with us

Then go on

This poem he wrote was a parody on the "Police Oath"

"DOST THOU ACCEPT THE OLD CREED OF COERCION
IN ENGLAND AS IN IRELAND TRIED AND TRUE,
DOST THOU REGARD ALL FREEDOM WITH AVERSION,
AND HATE HER NAM,
I DO!

WILT THOU RESPECT, COURT, VENERATE THE CLASSES
WHAT EE'R THEY SEEK TO COMPASS, - GOOD OR ILL,
WILT THOU MOLEST AND VILIFY THE MASSES
IN WORD AND DEED,
I WILL!

SWEARST THOU TO WEILD THE TRUNCHEON FOR THE TORY,
TO SMITE AND CURSE, AND WOUND, AND OVERBEAR,
THEN SEIZE AND PERSECUTE WITH LYING STORY
SOME INJURED WRETCH
I SWEAR!

HENRY SALT

Henry Salt was a master at Eton
College He was converted to Socialism
in 1880. While at Kings College,
Cambridge attacked authority
An associate J.L Joynes said:
"As masters at Eton both of us were
under suspicion as radicals, freethinkers,
and possessors of trycycles"

Henry Salt was at Trafalgar
Square on "Bloody Sunday" 1887
when police clubbed ferociously
the demonstrators The protest
was about poverty and unemployment
He was associated with John Burns
and Cunninghame Grahame, and a
friend of Annie Besant and George
Bernard Shaw. Salt eventually
became a Fabian.

H. McShane More Than
Just A Leader of
The Unemployed

x He Was A Scholar
of The First Order
But Self Educated
— and a Gentleman
To Boot — Not
One With A Top
Hat or Rolled
Umbrella.

x He was a gentleman
of The Press

(2)

OFTEN HE COULD BE SEEN IN MITCHELL LIBRARY IN FRONT OF HIM BOOKS ON JOHN KNOX + THE REFORMATION

X THIS PERIOD IN OUR HIST. FASCINATED HIM

HE WAS QUITE AN AUTHORITY ON TWO MEN OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT ADAM SMITH AND ADAM FERGUSON

(3)

He had read "The Wealth of Nations By Smith not once but many times.

He had read "The Hist of Civil Society" By Ferguson and was impressed so was a man called Marx see "Poverty of Philosophy."

over

④

TALK ABOUT ALIENATION
IS QUITE COMMONPLACE
NOWADAYS. ——

X WAS A REVELATION
IN SMITH AND
X FERGUSONS TIME
1767 – 1790

REFER TO KIRKALDY

SMITH CELEBRATION

(5)

ON THE PLATFORM.
GALBRAITH AND LORD
BOYLE THEN TORY
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

HARRY SPOKE FROM
THE FLOOR. HE
LET THE REAL ADAM
SMITH SPEAK FOR
HIMSELF
THE SMITH THAT
SAID, MERCHANTS
AND MANUFACTURERS
WERE MEAN, RAPACIOUS
AND MONOPOLIZERS
"SHOULD NEVER BE
ALLOWED TO RULE MANKIND"

(6)

x Condemned Rising of Prices and Depressing of Wages

x Was on Side of Tradesmen

Civil Govt instit for Security of Property ——

In Reality for the Defence of Rich against the Poor, and Men of Property.

(7)

SMITH ON WAR.
"THOSE WHO FELT THE
EFFECTS OF WAR least
ENJOYED IT MOS"

Boyle Speeches
Had To Go Home
To Think again

x PRESS
Many a Scoop
WHEN WITH
Daily WORKER

POLISH CAMPS +
KNOYDART
WITH FORWARD
"GOD + THE IRISH
BLAMED FOR POVERTY"

(8)

Billy Graham
1955 Press
Then Allister Cooke

Jack House says
"Pregnancies follow
Holy Rollers"

Harry Goes To
Kelvin Hall

= "No Business
Like Show
Business"

Conclude Same as at
Scattering of Ashes
Built Better Than
He Know"

ARTICLE FOR NEWSLETTER — BY LESLIE FORSTER

I was associated with Harry McShane
for over 13 years inside the Communist
Party, and another 30 years outside
the Communist Party. Harry's better
years were before the 2nd World War.
His leadership and activity with
the National Unemployed Workers
Movement, his fight on the
Glasgow Green for free speech,
his fight against evictions in
the Gorbals.

Along with Harry I resigned from
the Communist Party in 1953
With Hugh Savage, Ned Donaldson,
Bill McCulloch, and others. We
formed the Socialist Workers
Federation. We published a paper
called "Socialist Revolt", and
Held regular street corner
Meetings at Drury Street in
Glasgow. Sometimes we spoke
at the mound in Edinburgh.

3

The best years of Harry McShane's life was outside of the Communist Party. He started to take a new look at Marxism. He went back to "Capital" and particularly "Volume One". In his lifetime he lived through two revolutions, the "Russian Revolution", and the "Hungarian Revolution". He doffed his hat to Russian and Hungarian revolutionaries. He was a supreme optimist to the end; always hoping for big things from the British Working class.

Himself

Although Harry was interviewed from time to time on the Media, programmes like (Robin Day's) "Any Questions" did not cut much ice with him [Delete Some of the debates he thought a charade, depending solely upon hand picked audiences.]

He regretted the passing of ~~the~~ soap box orators, ~~and the men and women who spoke on them~~ (Although he thought it might come back someday.) Harry was a street corner ~~Orator~~ man who learned his profession at the University on the Green. I can remember when Harry Hugh Savage and myself left the Communist Party we did not drift apart, we came closer together Our belief in Marxism never faltered

(7)

We held open-air meetings in Drury Street Harry M'Shane was not a summer ~~soldier~~. I can still vividly remember him speaking in this street to a large audience in the bleak month of November. The meeting was commemorating the death of John M'Lean.

When a young man Harry hailed the Russian Revolution. At 64 years of age he was thrilled with the great Hungarian revolution of 1956. So keyed up was he, that along with Hugh and myself we chalked the streets of Glasgow into the 'Wee ~~sma'~~ hours. |People going to work next morning could see Harry's handiwork.|

It was plain and simple; slogan – it said
"ALL HAIL THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS
REVOLUTION!

Long before he got the freedom
of Glasgow he had the freedom
TO CHALLENGE THOSE IN exercise his right
to walk through the corridors of
power at George Square the
Municipal chambers. In his
lifetime he led many a deputation
to that August building.

Then there was his Journalist
days, DELETE first as Scottish Correspondent
for the daily worker, and then
writing for "Forward". He wrote
extensively about housing conditions
in Glasgow. He wrote a pamphlet
calling for 100,000 houses to
be built. But DELETE Harry was not
a statistics man or academic DELETE.
His writings were agitational
Many a Glasgow Housing convenor
took his verbal lashes for their
failings in not building faster.

(9)

Delete The two big strikes by thousands
Of Glasgow Building against
the sale of Corporation houses at
Merrylee he welcomed with great
enthusiasm.

Forward commissioned him to
write a feature article about
the Billy Graham evangelist
Rally in the Kelvin Hall
At the end Graham would ask
Ministers to renew their faith
and become born again
Christians. Booths were provided
at the back of the hall for the
clerics to confess their sins
I rember him telling me that
he was delighted to see ~~this~~ so many queuing up
This spectacle confirming his belief
in the bankruptcy of religion

His article was aptly headlined;
His article was aptly headlined;
— There's NO Business like Show
Business

He was rather astonished to see so many Queuing
up to unburden their souls. He always found
Christianity a good perch for sitting on the fence
and doing nothing

Harry was most interesting when he gave assessments of politicians past and present. Some of the more able Glasgow Tories had a sneaking regard for him. Men like Victor Warren, John McKelly and Wattie Elliot. Once he persuaded Warren when he was Lord Provost to put on Sir David Lyndsay's "Three Estates" at St. Andrews Halls

On another occassion when visiting Glasgow Art Gallery at Kelvingrove he discovered that the splendid portrait of Cunninghame Grahame had been taken out of display. Harry was furious and complained to the powers that be.

Never a man for the handful of silver or ~~the~~ a ribbon to put in his coat.

A regular visitor to the Peoples Palace, one of its most loyal friends. Both Elspeth King and Mike Donnelly curators were always honoured by his presence.

(11)

Harry McShane never went for
the handful of silver or the
ribbon to put in his coat.
He left Hugh Savage and
I a legacy more ~~princely~~ precious
than worldly goods
In many of our recent visits to
see him he always urged us
His Legacy was
to rekindle the memories and
to tell the tales of the Marxist
And Socialist Pioneers or as he put it the forgotten heroes of
Yesteryear. He was truly a
blithe spirit, and come to think
of it a hard act to follow
Will we ever see his like again?

His legacy was to rekindle

HARRY McSHANE

The MAN I KNEW.

My association with Harry McShane spans 40 years [He was many sided]. The Propagandist, public speaker, lecturer, journalist and educator. Delete [Whether listening or in conversation with him I always learned something new and fresh. Up until a month before he died he was still telling me tales of the Socialist Movement of byegone years. Delete]

Harry had a distinct flair for Propaganda. His first memory could be called a tale of Winnie and the Donkey.

Winnie being Winston Churchill and the donkey a spirited little beast from a stable in Parkhead [Delete in the east end of Glasgow. Delete]

(2)

It was the General Election of 1945
Both Harry and I were in the
Communist Party [^delete^ and supporting]
and working for Bob Cooney in
the Central Division, Glasgow...
Churchill was billed to tour
this constituency in support
of ^the^ Tory candidate [Sir Douglas
Hutchison]. Harry [thought it ^suggested we^
would be a great idea to]. hire
a donkey, tie Conservative Manifestos
to its tail, put ~~a~~ placards on its
~~side~~ ^on it^ saying I believe in Tory
promises [And on the other side
another placard that read:—
This is the Beaverbrook Express

[delete] I went to Parkhead, got the
donkey, walked it with some
difficulty all the way back
to the election rooms in Townhead.
[delete]

Came the day of the Churchill visit. Our donkey was dressed and ready to go. [Delete] was rarin' to go

Churchill came along George Street in an open car. He seen the donkey alright, and for good measure it brayed at the right time. Harry was over the moon. He thought the stunt went down a treat.

My second recollection is about a proposed squatters Ball to be held in the Grand Hotel at Charing cross in Glasgow's West end. In the late 1940's the squatters movement was on the upsurge. Harry myself and several colleagues broke into the [that] Grand [Delete] Hotel. This hotel [which] had been lying vacant since the end of the 2nd World War. [was unoccupied]

(4)

Delete

During the war it was occupied
by American troops. Delete At the time
of our break-in it belonged Delete
~~to the Cooperative Society~~ Delete
THE OWNERS WERE THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
We installed a good number
of homeless into the bedrooms,
but there was a [big] snag,
a lack of cooking facilities,
and light. ~~We had not long~~
THE POLICE WERE NOT LONG IN ARRIVING
~~to wait for the arrival of the~~
~~police.~~ Harry went out to
meet them with a list of
demands that included bedding
and a power switch-on.
The Assistant Chief Constable
didn't seem surprised when
Harry emerged from the front
door. His first remark was
McShane I might have known
you had something to do with
this.

Harry parleyed with the Team and the C.O.P representative (5)

The police summoned the Coop. representative to come to the spot, and it was while waiting for a reply to our demands that he proposed we should organize a Squatters Ball. The idea was to invite squatters from other parts of Glasgow to attend. The invitation he said should be in the form of a leaflet distributed ~~by~~ throughout the city and by ~~the~~ hundreds.

Alas it was not to be. Many of the families inside the ~~hotel~~ drifted away because of the police presence and other ~~factors~~. Still there was a consolation. It made the front page of the local press and was ~~well~~ mentioned in the National Press! / NEXT DAY IT MADE THE HEADLINES

How appropriate that the friends of Harry McShane should meet here on Glasgow Green, to scatter his ashes

To Socialists of ~~yesteryear~~ byegone years this was indeed hallowed ground

In those days Socialists would call it "The University on the Green". Surely Harry McShane was one of its ~~brightest~~ students

(2)

The Chartists spoke here. Willie Nairne, Bob Hutcheson, Bruce Glazier and J.F. Armour — pioneers of the S.D.F. in Glasgow campaigned and fought for the right of free speech on this green ~~sward~~ place — And it was here that Harry McShane and Tony Aldred, decades later, (35 years on) had to fight again for the right of assembly.

(3)

On this spot, M'Lean Maxton and Gallacher denounced the miseries of capitalism,

Harry was a soap box man, a street corner orator At "Flesher's Haugh" Jail Square or Nelson's Monument he chronicled the annals of Glasgow's poor A Marxist to the core he would say in a simple way that the poor will always be with us, as long as Capitalism ~~is~~ with us.

(4)

His politics however were not of the parish pump. He had wider horizons His roots were Scottish He was at Knoydart along with Hugh M'Diarmid when demobbed servicemen seized back their land.

Just as he fought for the right of speech on Glasgow Green, those of us gathered here may have to fight again. This time it will be against the property developers and the encroachers from yuppiedom who would destroy this dear green place

5

In his latter years, Harry regretted the failure of the Labour Movement to honour its pioneers and unsung Socialist Heroes

Those of us who were his friends have a great opportunity to redress the balance

That indeed would be a proper way to remember this special Man. — Harry M'Shane, You built better than you knew.

MARXIST TO THE CORE

He came to Marxist thought
before the first world war
In the footsteps of Willie Nairn,
the first really Glasgow Marxist,
Harry McShane studied Marx's Capital
Volume One from cover to cover
He often stated ~~his~~ criteria for
an acceptance ~~of Marx's thoughts~~ of Marxism
The first was Marx's theory of
Surplus value the second the
Materialist conception of history,
~~But~~ last but not least a
belief in the class struggle
~~Just as Marx~~ studied Adam Smith
before writing Capital, Harry
~~McSha~~
He enriched ~~his~~ knowledge
Harry McShane became an established
authority on Smith, His favourite
Scots philosopher of the enlightenment
was Adam Ferguson.

over

Sir,
Maggies Ministry of Fear was a revealing article. Often referred to

In earlier years he enriched his knowledge of the Sc. Reformation, with particular reference to John Knox

Towards the end of his life he had this to say Quote about Marxism

HARRY M'Shane THE WRITER

A member of the N.U.J. and Scottish Correspondent for the Daily Worker. Year in year out he covered the STUC and Scottish Labour Party Conferences. Municipal affairs in Glasgow received his serious attention. He wrote for the Socialist "Forward" His last article was headed "There's no business like show business" This was a trenchant attack on Billy Graham's evangelism. A pamphleteer of no mean ability, he wrote on such various subjects from topics ~~as~~ Housing to ~~on~~ the life of John M'Lean. His prose style was simple with short straight given to high falutin words.

After leaving the communist Party he edited and wrote for Socialist Revolt the organ of the Socialist Workers Federation

He sought out new territories for spreading the Socialist message by founding some new branches of the S.D.F.

ON MARXISM

"The only people that can talk about a future for mankind are Marxists, We shouldn't be ashamed to say so"

" It must howevere be Marxism resurrected from the bog of futility and obscurity, into which it has been put by leaders who used it as Nothing more than a label".

ON UNEMPLOYMENT

"Last night speaking on Television Michael Foot was talking about unemployment that it would be with us for a 'long time to come. For the first time he was admitting that unemployment was permanent under Capitalism He had No solution to offer. And we can't raise peoples hopes - we have to make propaganda and say clearly that there can be NO solution to the problem of unemployent under capitalism.

[over

"We have to argue that alongside the fight to improve the conditions of the unemployed, we must fight all the time to change the system."

FIGHTING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

"What made the Hunger marches a real success, I think was the backing we got from ordinary working class people. Local people were sympathetic to the marchers. They came out everywhere in big droves, particularly in England. We had tremendous turnouts to see the marchers, and we got money from them all." And the money kept us going".

"I had a fight in Glasgow to get increases for the unemployed children of sixpence from 1/6d to 2/. Sixpence was a lot of money in those days. I had a big fight over that. I got it ultimately. Well we got that kind of thing, and small concessions here and there. I think we did a lot of good. That's what's wrong now. its not being done.

FIGHTING FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

With the Hunger Marches, Harry McShane became a National figure highlighted by the great March to London and the seige of Edinburgh. He was to say long after those events "What made the hunger marches, a real success, I think, was the backing we got from ordinary people"

In Glasgow he fought to get increases for the children of the unemployed demanding a rise of sixpence which was quite a lot in those days. He was successful. The rates increased from 1/6d to 2 shillings. The N.U.W.M. was able to get some other concessions from a reluctant authority.

over

Harry McShane always maintained that unemployment was permanent under capitalism. To agitate about the plight of the unemployed was necessary. The only solution he thought was to end the capitalist system.

IRELAND HER OWN

Harry M'Shane took an abiding interest in Irish affairs. While still a young man he moved a resolution in Kinning Park at an election meeting. His resolution called for the release of Jim Larkin the Irish Labour leader. He supported a United Ireland before and after partition. While some doubted Jim Connolly's wisdom Harry welcomed the Easter rising. 50 years on in 1966, he was an invited guest at the Easter rising commemoration in Dublin. The last time he spoke publicly about the Irish question was in the Woodside Halls, Glasgow sharing a platform with Bernadette Devlin. He called for the withdrawal of British troops.

Harry McShane was a historian without a PhD in his own right. Nobody could mistake him for anything else but a Scotsman

TAKE OUT

He attended a conference in Kircaldy to celebrate the life and work of Adam Smith the father of classical economy. That day the platform was stacked with economists and notables ranging from J K Galbraith to the then Minister of Education Lord Boyle. The Tories have been gey fond of claiming Smith as one of their own.

Speaking from the body of the hall, Harry debunked their pretensions

(2)

Some of the quotes he gave, written by the hand of the real Adam Smith came as a bombshell, to the narrow minded

In a letter to Sir John Sinclair, Smith was to say "I dislike all taxes that may effect the necessary expenses of the poor They according to circumstances either oppress the people immediately, subject to them, or are repaid with great interest by the rich"

Piling on the agony he was to ~~city~~ cite Smith's atitude to labour when he commented that if workingmen combined together they would be hut down by the authorities.

It was a tour de force. The Noble Lord Boyle was flummoxed, and rather exposed as deficient in knowledge of Adam Smith.

A Japanese professor aptly summed things up when referring to Harry's contribution: "It takes a Scotsman to know a Scotsman"

Adam Ferguson wrote a treatise called; — "A History of Civil Society" in 1755

Karl Marx paid attention to this in his book "The Poverty of Philosophy" Ferguson was stabbing in the dark at a question that was to loom large in the latter half of the 20th Century; — the alienation of labour.

Fergusons works and writings are not so easy to come by those days except in the Mitchell and the University Of Edinburgh Library

Harry McShane was to spend many hours poring ~~over~~ the writings of Ferguson of Bath and Smith [at those establishments]

The "Mitchell" was his favourite haunt and used their excellent resources to the full

gel fated curator of the Peoples Palace Michael Donnelly can remember seeing Harry surrounded by tomes of books concerning the Scottish Reformation; and it goes without saying that John Knox his life and his work [sermons] ~~was one of his favourites~~ (was a favourite) was one of his historical favourites

He did not see Knox as just a ranting raving proselyte of Calvin breathing dragons flames of anti-Catholicism

He thought Knox was highly intelligent but it mystified him ~~that~~ when Mary gave him a lifeline, he blew it.

An enthusiast of working class history he was the first to revive memories of the striking Calton Weavers [GLASGOW]

OF 1787

Glasgow Trades Council commissioned him to write a booklet depicting this courageous struggle

A stone remembering the 3 Martyrs killed by the military was erected by public subscription in 1836

To their credit Glasgow Trades Council renewed the stone in 1931

(6)

Prompted by Harry McShane the Council agreed to erect an adjacent stone dedicated to the weavers

This stone was duly erected in 1957, and commemorated at a ceremony attended by Glasgow's Labour Lord Provost.

It is as well to recall that Harry was an honorary member of the fledgling Scottish Labour History Society

DISPUTE ON 5 DAY WEEK
in Gas Industry.

Since 1954 been discussions on possibility of 5 day week – agreed by both sides it is practical – but manner of operating and fact that J.I.C. certain craftsmen like plumbers not represented. – Matters came to a head in Dundee when craftsmen there after rejecting Gas Board proposals, had taken stoppage on Saturday for 16 weeks, eventually management gave them an ultimatum to work their 5 day week, At this the men took strike action, solidarity action was taken in Glasgow & Edinburgh elsewhere by banning Saturday

Value in excess of the price of the force of labour power is what we call surplus value. It is around this that the struggle between the workers and the capitalists revolves. That applies under State capitalism or under private capitalism. The attack to curtail the power of the trade unions here in Britain is in line with the aim of the so-called Communist Party in Poland. The State in all circumstances is a repressive institution. This does not rule out the vanity and ambitions of leading politicians

Nothing does more to enhance the reputation of a politician than to appear as a leader in war. Mrs Thatcher has won a cheap reputation over the war in the Falklands war, and she means to make use of that reputation in the next general election

Much of the poverty and hardship in the world is due, directly, to the waste of fabulous sums of money in preparations for a third world war. Stalin won a reputation as a war leader in the second world war. He had no intention of being involved in that war. He was quite prepared to watch the destruction of Britain and France in that war. Through Dimitrov he declared Britain and France to be the aggressors. After the war, ~~by~~ by negotiations with British and American politicians he got control of 800,000 square miles of territory. He wrecked what was reckoned to be the world communist movement. Hitler was no more. The influence of Stalin was increased. Victories in ~~the~~ two world wars left with weapons powerful except to destroy civilisation. Thatcher and Regan are competing with the Brezhnev bureaucrats in preparation for that war.

Irwin Elijah

Brother son of Elijah

Irwin [illegible]

Oliver Cromwell

[illegible] signs of Harmony first steps [illegible]

Not [illegible] its well dealt with a [illegible]

The Royal Family is [illegible]

Members of the Royal Family are [illegible]

~~Members of the Royal Family~~

Roles of the Royal Family

Royal Family

[illegible] signs of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Not [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible]

The Royal Family is [illegible]

Members of the Royal Family are [illegible]

Members of the Royal [illegible]

[illegible] of the Royal Fam[illegible]

Royal Prince

Housing Deputation
Glasgow Herald 12/May/1916

Dillon's speech in Parliament
Glasgow Herald 12th May, 1916

Sentences not under martial law but in the Defence of the Realm Act

Connolly and J. McDermott

"The McDonnells of Antrim"
Glasgow Herald 13th May, 1916

Scottish Land and Labour League
A. Scheu, Secretary. Meeting addressed
by Hyndman, 3rd Dec. 1884

Meetings addressed in Glasgow by
Robertson and Nairn
"Justice" 13th Dec. 1884

Note a meeting of a Branch.

(resolution on unemployment
moved by Bruce Glasier

A meeting addressed by Hyndman
in Glasgow. Small of Cambuslang
moved a vote of thanks (miners)
After the meeting a gathering of
Socialists was held. Nairn appointed
interim secretary. Moses McGibbon
interim treasurer (Glasgow Branch)
"Justice" 6th Dec. 1884

Meeting in Edinburgh
Scottish Land
and Labour League

Letter 20th March to
Lord Provost.

Learns that "The aspect of
political affairs in Glasgow
and neighbourhood, is at present
more serious than in this district,
but there is much reason to fear,

Preface to Glasgow Records
by Robert Renwick
Reference to disturbances
in 1816 Eagle Inn had
large stables
"The buildings were completed
in 1821 - then - after 1850
were sold to Govan Parochial Board,
and converted into a poorhouse

Les and Ned

1] I am aware that you two are sick of being asked about the past. However, you have to accept that for some people, including the likes of me, you are part and parcel of a direct link into a great socialist tradition. It is important that work is continued in our home area, not only for the sake of our own radical history but also because it has a bearing on the wider socialist movement. I'm always struck when I meet people from other cultures when these similar sorts of problems arise that they have faced, these issues that socialists are always facing in one form or another eg. whether to work within parliament or stay outside, careerism infiltration, reformism, sectarianism,, united fronts or not, etc. etc. We can get a better understanding of this wider movement by examining our own times and the personalities and movements therein.

2] We also know that these days the knives of the revisionists are out. As a rule of thumb we take Red Clydeside to have existed for a period of about eight years, say from 1914 to 1922 (I can't quite remember), and that the term the 'Red Clydesiders' can only really apply to folk who were involved directly at that time. It is important that we don't allow the establishment to give a revised version of the socialist tradition. Nor do we let the academics highjack radical history; even well-intentioned academics will create their own concepts and impose their own conditions. It is surprising how easy some contemporary critics find it to deny the existence of Red Clydeside. Obviously this is to do with the education system that is stuck down our throats. It isn't just young people who know absolutely nothing of their own history. None of us do, it makes it too easy to tell us all lies.

3] It is maybe a worthwhile thing to consider that this matter, the existence or non-existence, the importance or unimportance, of Red Clydeside, is to some extent a red herring, because it takes us away from the actual tradition itself. It is much more crucial surely that we get a proper line on that tradition, and that we are able to seek out intellectual continuity where it exists, as for example through 18th century figures such as the Calton weavers, and Alexander Wilson the poet and great ornithologist, the Friends of the People, through another weaver, James Wilson, executed at 63 years of age for High Treason, and the other men around the Scottish Insurrection, such as Robert Owen, through the Chartists and the Temperance movement, radical preachers like Chalmers and the disruption of the Church of Scotland, and then the stonemason Hugh Miller, John Murdoch of the Highland League, the stonebreaker Willie Nairn, these men of the 19th century[1] who had a direct and personal influence, as Les and Hughie stated in *All for the Cause*, "the historical line that stretches from Willie Nairn to Maclean and then on to Guy Aldred and Harry McShane." and includes many others, before and after.

4] I think the international side is important as well as interesting. We have the connections from the Second and Third International, Kropotkin, Peter Petroff as a close friend and comrade of John Maclean, how Maclean's reputation extended widely, given that he never left these islands. Of course he was invited to Russia, especially later, to recover his health. Jim Young also believes that Maclean's reputation could have endured even if he had died before the 1st World War, and not been subject to these horrible attacks from the British State while iin prison for his opposition to the war. We also have the direct link through Connolly and Larkin ,Irish/USA connection.

5] Hypothetical questions are kind of daft but I wonder how matters would have gone on the formation of the CPGB if John Maclean had travelled with J.S.Clarke, Gallacher, Helen Crawfurd and the rest for the 1920 congress in Moscow, and presented the case properly for a Scottish Party, in opposition to Lenin and the rest. It has to be remembered that for a great many socialist people, one thing that the tradition displays right the way through is that self-determination for Scotland was an essential part of the agenda. Sometimes it is made to seem like John Maclean was the only one who ever thought along these lines, obviously just part of the propaganda that the CPGB put out about him?

6] Around the time of the formation of the CPGB a question that occurs is that if McShane was strongly involved with Maclean, James MacDougal, the Tramps Trust and so on, why did he go to the CPGB? As we know it was formed out of the BSP and in Scotland the BSP was lacking in revolutionary credibility even at that period in time.

Some could argue that for the likes of Willie Gallacher, because of the different pulls he had on him as a trades unionist, from such as the Clyde Workers Committee, etc. that the CPGB might seem a natural step, perhaps the most natural. But there again J.S.Clarke, like Gallacher, represented the CWC in Moscow but he opted out the CPGB and went to the ILP. Did Harry ever feel that he had gone in the wrong direction back when he joined the CP? Harry was always a bit of a sore thumb to the CPGB hierarchy so his thinking was always that bit different. In retrospect do YOU think that Harry went the wrong way?

7] What about any of these questions to do with the socialist tradition going back into the 18th century, did any of it ever percolate down while you were all still in the CP?

8] I had to go through Hughie's letters in preparartion for this work, and there was a nice card from Raya Dunayevskaya, written following the tragic death of Hugh's youngest son. The connection to Raya Dunayevskaya and to the USA in general will be an interesting one for many people, this side of yourselves and Hugh, and crucially of course, Harry McShane who corresponded with her for 30 years. I remember Hughie mentioning that she stayed at his house when she was in Britain. Dunayevskaya is an important figure, philosopher and writer,

Chairwoman of *News and Letters Committees*, she was also Trotsky's secretary. Harry's correspondence with her began in earnest after the time you all left the Party: I don't know if it began earlier than that. Can you talk about this, and a side point, was Trotsky an important figure in your thinking at the time you left the Party, or indeed at any time after.

9] There is an interesting essay by Ronald L.Meek, *The Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology*, where he argues that "in the latter half of the 18th century the Scottish Historical School developed...Classical sociology[2] to a stage where it was becoming remarkably similar, at least in its broad outlines, to Marxist sociology." The four main figures were all professors: Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson and John Millar; they were impressed by Montesquieu's work ["man is born in society, and there he remains." The thorny subject of 'the democratic intellect' could rear its ugly head here...!

10] Meek also makes the comment on Adam Smith that "the more narrowly economic views of *The Wealth of Nations* have usually been emphasised at the expense of the general sociological system of which they were essentially a part." McShane was a great reader of Adam Smith and as we know this side of things was important to him. It definitely seems to tie in with the need to remember the humanist side of Marxist. Meek's article was published in pamphlet form in the mid 1950s[3], did any of you know him by any chance? At the period you all left the Party Harry McShane went back to studying Marx, especially the 1st volume of Capital,he wanted to look at things on the basic level again. Maybe to see where the Party had gone wrong, where the wrong turns had been taken by the socialist movement in general. Or corrupted - is corrupted a better word, that the socialist movement had become corrupted? As I understand it Harry and yourselves felt that the morality had gone at the expense of the economic and there is also the comment from Raya Dunayevskaya along similar lines, that 'Marxism was nothing if it was not a theory of liberation", that Marxism surely has to be offering the working class people a different way of living their life, and so on.[4]

all of that was just to take us into the subject

---

[1]Willie Nairn's contemporary and one of the co-founders of the Glasgow branch of the SDF was Moses McGibbon, a delegate at the 1907 Amsterdam congress of the Second International where, according to W.M.Haddow in his *My Seventy Years* (Gibson & Sons 1943), McGibbon "appeared in full Highland dress." Keir Hardie, Rosa Luxemboiurg, August Bebel were among those also present. George Yates was at the Paris Congress, see *All for the Cause*.

[2] he attributes the term to Roy Pascal p85]

[3] reprinted from *Democracy and the Labour Movement* (Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1955]

[4] Dunayevskaya's comment that "Marxism is a theory of liberation or it is nothing", cited in *All for the Cause*.

Les and Ned

1] I am aware that you two are sick of being asked about the past. However, you have to accept that for some people, including the likes of me, you are part and parcel of a direct link into a great socialist tradition. It is important that work is continued in our home area, not only for the sake of our own radical history but also because it has a bearing on the wider socialist movement. I'm always struck when I meet people from other cultures when these similar sorts of problems arise that they have faced, these issues that socialists are always facing in one form or another eg. whether to work within parliament or stay outside, careerism infiltration, reformism, sectarianism,, united fronts or not, etc. etc. We can get a better understanding of this wider movement by examining our own times and the personalities and movements therein.

2] We also know that these days the knives of the revisionists are out. As a rule of thumb we take Red Clydeside to have existed for a period of about eight years, say from 1914 to 1922 (I can't quite remember), and that the term the 'Red Clydesiders' can only really apply to folk who were involved directly at that time. It is important that we don't allow the establishment to give a revised version of the socialist tradition. Nor do we let the academics highjack radical history; even well-intentioned academics will create their own concepts and impose their own conditions. It is surprising how easy some contemporary critics find it to deny the existence of Red Clydeside. Obviously this is to do with the education system that is stuck down our throats. It isn't just young people who know absolutely nothing of their own history. None of us do, it makes it too easy to tell us all lies.

3] It is maybe a worthwhile thing to consider that this matter, the existence or non-existence, the importance or unimportance, of Red Clydeside, is to some extent a red herring, because it takes us away from the actual tradition itself. It is much more crucial surely that we get a proper line on that tradition, and that we are able to seek out intellectual continuity where it exists, as for example through 18th century figures such as the Calton weavers, and Alexander Wilson the poet and great ornithologist, the Friends of the People, through another weaver, James Wilson, executed at 63 years of age for High Treason, and the other men around the Scottish Insurrection, such as Robert Owen, through the Chartists and the Temperance movement, radical preachers like Chalmers and the disruption of the Church of Scotland, and then the stonemason Hugh Miller, John Murdoch of the Highland League, the stonebreaker Willie Nairn, these men of the 19th century[1] who had a direct and personal influence, as Les and Hughie stated in *All for the Cause*, "the historical line that stretches from Willie Nairn to Maclean and then on to Guy Aldred and Harry McShane." and includes many others, before and after.

4] I think the international side is important as well as interesting. We have the connections from the Second and Third International, Kropotkin, Peter Petroff as a close friend and comrade of John Maclean, how Maclean's reputation extended widely, given that he never left these islands. Of course he was invited to Russia, especially later, to recover his health. Jim Young also believes that Maclean's reputation could have endured even if he had died before the 1st World War, and not been subject to these horrible attacks from the British State while iin prison for his opposition to the war. We also have the direct link through Connolly and Larkin ,Irish/USA connection.

5] Hypothetical questions are kind of daft but I wonder how matters would have gone on the formation of the CPGB if John Maclean had travelled with J.S.Clarke, Gallacher, Helen Crawfurd and the rest for the 1920 congress in Moscow, and presented the case properly for a Scottish Party, in opposition to Lenin and the rest. It has to be remembered that for a great many socialist people, one thing that the tradition displays right the way through is that self-determination for Scotland was an essential part of the agenda. Sometimes it is made to seem like John Maclean was the only one who ever thought along these lines, obviously just part of the propaganda that the CPGB put out about him?

6] Around the time of the formation of the CPGB a question that occurs is that if McShane was strongly involved with Maclean, James MacDougal, the Tramps Trust and so on, why did he go to the CPGB? As we know it was formed out of the BSP and in Scotland the BSP was lacking in revolutionary credibility even at that period in time.

Some could argue that for the likes of Willie Gallacher, because of the different pulls he had on him as a trades unionist, from such as the Clyde Workers Committee, etc. that the CPGB might seem a natural step, perhaps the most natural. But there again J.S.Clarke, like Gallacher, represented the CWC in Moscow but he opted out the CPGB and went to the ILP. Did Harry ever feel that he had gone in the wrong direction back when he joined the CP? Harry was always a bit of a sore thumb to the CPGB hierarchy so his thinking was always that bit different. In retrospect do YOU think that Harry went the wrong way?

7] What about any of these questions to do with the socialist tradition going back into the 18th century, did any of it ever percolate down while you were all still in the CP?

8] I had to go through Hughie's letters in preparartion for this work, and there was a nice card from Raya Dunayevskaya, written following the tragic death of Hugh's youngest son. The connection to Raya Dunayevskaya and to the USA in general will be an interesting one for many people, this side of yourselves and Hugh, and crucially of course, Harry McShane who corresponded with her for 30 years. I remember Hughie mentioning that she stayed at his house when she was in Britain. Dunayevskaya is an important figure, philosopher and writer,

Chairwoman of *News and Letters Committees*, she was also Trotsky's secretary. Harry's correspondence with her began in earnest after the time you all left the Party: I don't know if it began earlier than that. Can you talk about this, and a side point, was Trotsky an important figure in your thinking at the time you left the Party, or indeed at any time after.

9] There is an interesting essay by Ronald L.Meek, *The Scottish Contribution to Marxist Sociology*, where he argues that "in the latter half of the 18th century the Scottish Historical School developed...Classical sociology[2] to a stage where it was becoming remarkably similar, at least in its broad outlines, to Marxist sociology." The four main figures were all professors: Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, William Robertson and John Millar; they were impressed by Montesquieu's work ["man is born in society, and there he remains." The thorny subject of 'the democratic intellect' could rear its ugly head here...!

10] Meek also makes the comment on Adam Smith that "the more narrowly economic views of *The Wealth of Nations* have usually been emphasised at the expense of the general sociological system of which they were essentially a part." McShane was a great reader of Adam Smith and as we know this side of things was important to him. It definitely seems to tie in with the need to remember the humanist side of Marxist. Meek's article was published in pamphlet form in the mid 1950s[3], did any of you know him by any chance? At the period you all left the Party Harry McShane went back to studying Marx, especially the 1st volume of Capital,he wanted to look at things on the basic level again. Maybe to see where the Party had gone wrong, where the wrong turns had been taken by the socialist movement in general. Or corrupted - is corrupted a better word, that the socialist movement had become corrupted? As I understand it Harry and yourselves felt that the morality had gone at the expense of the economic and there is also the comment from Raya Dunayevskaya along similar lines, that 'Marxism was nothing if it was not a theory of liberation", that Marxism surely has to be offering the working class people a different way of living their life, and so on.[4]

all of that was just to take us into the subject

---

[1]Willie Nairn's contemporary and one of the co-founders of the Glasgow branch of the SDF was Moses McGibbon, a delegate at the 1907 Amsterdam congress of the Second International where, according to W.M.Haddow in his *My Seventy Years* (Gibson & Sons 1943), McGibbon "appeared in full Highland dress." Keir Hardie, Rosa Luxemboiurg, August Bebel were among those also present. George Yates was at the Paris Congress, see *All for the Cause*.

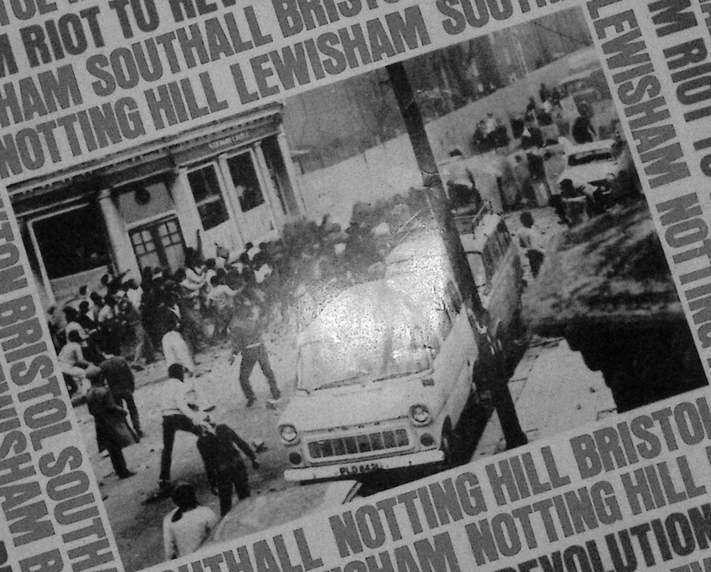
[2] he attributes the term to Roy Pascal p85]

[3] reprinted from *Democracy and the Labour Movement* (Lawrence & Wishart Ltd., 1955]

[4] Dunayevskaya's comment that "Marxism is a theory of liberation or it is nothing", cited in *All for the Cause*.

socialist REVIEW

Monthly magazine of the Socialist Workers Party
16 May – 14 June 1981: 50p



FROM RIOT TO REVOLUTION

BRIXTON BRISTOL NOTTING HILL LEWISHAM SOUTHALL

Up against the bans

In the last issue of *Socialist Review* we took a calm look at the recent spate of police bans on demonstrations and posed the question 'banning the nazis or bashing the left?'. Within a fortnight the police had confirmed our answer with yet another four week ban on demonstrations in London.

Now we need to ask another question—how do we beat the bans? And we need an answer urgently because the situation has now got beyond either academic argument or minor irritation.

This can be seen simply by looking at the statistics. The Public Order Act was used to impose an almost continuous ban on marches in London from 1947 and 1951. But in the thirty year period from 1951 to 1980 there were only nine bans (five in London, four outside).

Now turn to March 1981. During that single month there were the following bans:

London One month from March 5
Wolverhampton Two weeks from March 20
Leicester One month from March 20
Leeds Four weeks from March 21
South Yorkshire (four districts) One week from March 22
Glasgow Three months from April 1

The new four week ban in London from April 25 provides very rapid proof that March was no aberration.

The effects of these bans in preventing the left from mobilising are already real:

The Leeds ban prevented a mass send off for the Easter CND Trans-Pennine march

The London bans have twice prevented the solidarity movement with El Salvador launching itself onto the streets.

And the second London ban enabled the police to criminalise solidarity with the Irish struggle at its most critical hour.

It is no use pretending that a demonstration can quickly be turned into a rally and little but pride is lost. If we wanted rallies we'd have rallies. We want demonstrations precisely because they can mobilise more people and enable them to voice their anger. In each of the cases we give above there can be no doubt that the ban not only harmed the morale of the protesters but also seriously diminished their numbers.

Nor can we pretend that a demonstration can be put off for a month with little harm done. You cannot have an Easter CND march a month later, nor can solidarity with a dying man be calmly rescheduled until after his death.

The simple facts of the matter are that the bans are already seriously harming our ability to organise, and that the police show every intention of turning the screw even tighter. The simple conclusion is that the bans must be challenged—and soon, before they become accepted as a fact of life.

The National Council for Civil Liberties have done a good job in providing information on what they describe as 'a sinister change of strategy' by police and government. And they have exposed the legal hypocrisy of imposing blanket bans on the pretext of banning fascist demonstrations, because in fact the Public Order Act of 1936 does provide for a ban to be limited to 'a class or classes of processions'.

Legal redress?

Indeed, a specific ban has once been imposed. But when you look at what it was then the limits of this argument become clear. It was in September 1961 to ban 'any public procession oganised by body of persons known as the Commitee of 100'. In other words it was against the radical wing of the CND movement—against the left! That should be enough warning against countering 'blanket' bans by pleading for 'specific' ones. In any case the present mood of the courts holds little hope for legal redress.

So challenging the bans means breaking them. A lot of people on the left will agree with that but with a rider 'beware of adventurism'. There is, however, a serious danger that the rider will be writ too large.

Of course if you have a hundred rather sheepish demonstrators faced by a hundred police the dozen would-be Bolsheviks who proudly step forward will be onto a hiding to nothing, apart from large fines and a guarantee that at least fifty of the sheepish demonstrators won't turn up next time.

Every effort must be made to get wide ranging commitments to defy the bans. But these mean nothing unless they are put to the test. There is no escaping the fact that someone, somewhere, sometime has to make that 'adventurist' step toward the police cordon.

Whether they get through can never be one hundred per cent guaranteed. It will depend on the numbers and anger of the demonstrators and the degree of support for their cause, and it will depend on the numbers and organisation of the police and what they feel they can get away with. Some luck will also be involved. All that is certain is that the longer it is put off the harder it will be.

The few hundred H-Block demonstrators who attempted to break the London ban on April 26 judged well. They sensed that despite their relatively small numbers the mood of anger over Bobby Sands meant that their defiance would not be felt as foolish heroics. They may only have got a few hundred yards, but as one senior police officer commented in an unguarded moment that 'was not bad for a banned demonstration'. The thirty or so arrests was a small price to pay for not only thrusting solidarity in Britain with the Irish struggle into the news but also providing better propaganda for defying the bans than a hundred public meetings.

Breaking the bans will require that where similar circumstances occur the same decision for action is made.

But it will also need the big battalions. Not the never-never land big battalions that will eventually come at some time after a 'Labour movement campaign'. But the ones we have already got lined up. Two of these are of particular importance. The first is the People's March. Given the present workings of the Martin Webster—Sir David McNee public order double act, that could well be threatened by bans when it enters London at the end of the month. The second is the CND march from Faslane to Glasgow on June 6 and 7 which is covered by the three month Glasgow ban. On these two we must be quite clear. No copping out at the top. We demonstrate, bans or no bans. Peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must.

Pete Goodwin

MARXISM 81

Seven days of Socialist ideas, discussion and entertainment. July 10 - 17.

Marxism 81 is organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation. This year it is at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London, E1. £11.50 in advance, £13 on door. Write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London, E2, or ring 01-986 8355, for further details.

Courses at Marxism 81 include ★ A Century of War and Revolution ★ The Labour Party ★ Mapping the Missile Madness ★ Introduction to Marxism ★ The Mass Media★ Sexual Politics ★ Advanced Economics ★ The Fight for Socialism in Eastern Europe ★ Ireland ★ Women's Politics ★ Debates within Marxism ★ Modern Writers ★ Working for the State ★ Classical Marxism ★ The Politics of Black Liberation ★ Anatomy of the Revolutionary Left ★ Literature Women's Writing ★ Imperialism and Revolution Today ★

BOBBY SANDS MP 1954-1981

The Tory government has followed a path in the last few weeks that could only end in bitter confrontation on the streets of Northern Ireland. They allowed Bobby Sands MP to starve to death. They did so rather than concede the principle that he was a political prisoner—despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Catholic population had expressed their support for that principle in the ballot boxes of Fermanagh and South Tyrone. With wooden insistence Thatcher repeated 'a criminal is a criminal is a criminal', even though she knows very well that what has driven thousands of young men and women in the six counties to take up the gun and to face long years in prison is not the search for illicit gain, but the desire to fight back against a state built upon discrimination and sectarian hatred.

That this is a *political* motivation was recognised by a government of which Thatcher was a member back in 1972 when it conceded 'special status' for republican prisoners. Bobby Sands himself was a beneficiary of this recognition during his first term of imprisonment. It was only with his second term for the same offence (possessing arms) that he became 'a criminal'.

The reason for the change which led to death—and which may well have led to many more deaths on the streets of Belfast and Derry by the time you read this—was a conscious, political decision by a British government.

In 1972 an attempt to subdue the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland through wholesale repression had failed. The internament of hundreds of anti-unionists in the summer of 1971 and the massacre of Bloody Sunday, six months after, only served to increase the scale of resistance, and to produce a huge groundswell of anti-British sentiment across the border in the Republic. After the British embassy in Dublin went up in flames, the Tories did a U-turn, pushed for further reforms of the Northern Ireland state and even negotiated with the Provos. Special Status was a by-product of this turn.

But Britain's rulers were not prepared to go beyond a certain point in their attack upon the inbuilt sectarianism and discrimination of Northern Ireland. After the Republican population resisted attempts to maintain the pattern of discrimination by handing over to Protestants houses that had been allocated to Catholics, the Tories stopped treating the Provos as negotiators and started to talk of them as terrorists once again. And when, in 1974 the Protestant population moved en masse in defence of their priveleges (the 'Loyalist strike') a Labour government did another U-turn.

socialist REVIEW

CONTENTS:

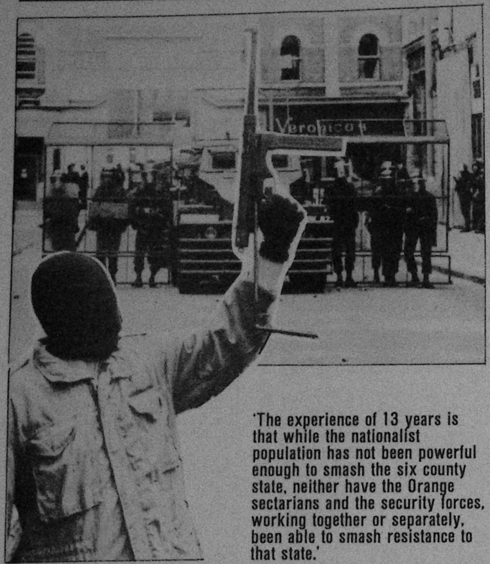
2 Beating the Bans
3-4 Editorial: Bobby Sands
5 Lebanon
6 India
7-11 Brixton: Class riot, not riot, Interview; Bristol one year on; From riot to revolution
12-17 Unemployment: the 30s and the 80s; Harry McShane: Fighting back in Italy; Debate on import controls.
18-19 Shirley Williams reviewed by Paul Foot
20-24 Industrial Discussion: Labour Party factory branches; NUT conference; Witch hunt in steel union; Railways; NUJ conference; Buses.
25-27 Poland: The party and the economy
28-29 Orangeism in Glasgow
30 Writer Reviewed: Nadine Gordimer
31 Letters
32 Les Blair interviewed
33-34 Books: Feminism and class struggle; The German family.
35 Theatre and Films
36 ABC of Socialism: XYZ will be written on the street barricades

Edited by Chris Harman
Assisted by Colin Sparks, Simon Turner, Pete Goodwin, Norah Carlin, Sue Cockerill, Stuart Axe, Jane Ure Smith, Dave Beecham, Gareth Jenkins, Jill Poole, Jon Bearman, Christine Kenny, Jim Scott, Andy Durgan Peter Court

Films: Jane Ure Smith

Business Pete Goodwin, Jane Ure Smith

Correspondance and subscriptions to Socialist Review, PO Box 82, London E2. Please make cheques and postal order payable to SWD. Socialist Review is sent free to all prisoners on request.
ISSN 0141-2442
Printed by East End (Offset) (TU All Depts) London E



'The experience of 13 years is that while the nationalist population has not been powerful enough to smash the six county state, neither have the Orange sectarians and the security forces, working together or separately, been able to smash resistance to that state.'

and abandoned the attempt to impose a reformed governmental structure on Northern Ireland. A by-product of *this* turn was the ending of special status and the treating as criminals of everyone who fought back against the state.

It is the logic of this turn which is now being acted out. The present Tory government is treading the path prepared by Labour, and is insisting that it does not matter how great a proportion of the Catholic population object to their oppression and align themselves with Republican demands. These demands, it insists, are criminal demands, and crude force has to be used to repress them.

What that meant was shown even before Bobby Sands' death. First an army landrover drove straight at a crowd of stone throwing youth, knocked down two of them, and then deliberately drove backwards over their bodies, (see eyewitness reports in *Sunday Times* 25 April) And then the security forces lifted 60 people whose only 'crime' was being active in the H-block committees—little more than a rerun of internment.

No wonder people in the nationalist areas are fearing a repetition of the repression of 1971-2. No wonder they believe that, under the protective eye of the British army and the RUC, Loyalist murder gangs are preparing an onslaught designed to beat them into submission. No wonder they are stocking food and organising defence committees.

All this takes place as Ian Paisley is making a bid to assert his control over the Loyalist population in the local elections, boasting that he is prepared to do a repeat of 1912 and use force to get his way.

The British government has shown few signs of relenting in its turn to naked repression. It believes that the death of Sands is of immense symbolic importance. If the nationalist and republican population of the North is incapable of forcing concessions after the bitter climax of the hunger strike, then it is incapable of forcing concessions at any point in time. In Tory eyes that amounts to the defeat of the the republican movement and lays the ground for a 'political' solution in the six counties based upon massive concessions to Paisley.

Not inevitable

But it is not inevitable that the government succeeds in this strategy. The experience of 13 years is that while the nationalist population has not been powerful enough to smash the six county state, neither have the Orange sectarians and the security forces, working together or separately, been able to smash the resistance to that state.

Over recent weeks there has been a resurgence of the movement on the streets of the Catholic areas. The youth are prepared to go beyond just marching and to show their resistance with the brick and the petrol bomb. The Provos still have the military capacity to take on the British troops. There is a possibility that the combined efforts of these forces will be sufficient to maintain public disorder long enough for it to be damaging to the present Tory strategy and force concessions for the remaining hunger strikers.

However, the lesson from 1972 has to be remembered. It was what hapened in the South, as much as what happened in the North, that broke the Tory offensive then. European capitalism does not like to see the stability of that small, but highly profitable, state endangered by hamfisted actions by British security forces across its borders.

This does not mean putting faith in Charles Haughey the Southern premier. During Bobby Sands' dying days he managed to face several different directions at once, while doing nothing. He hid behind the ineffectual gestures of Sile De Valera, he gave John Hume's initiative a gentle prod from a safe distance, he misled Bobby Sands' sister Marcella about the likely outcome of the European Human Rights' Commission initiative, but worst of all, he put no pressure on Thatcher, with whom he claims a 'special relationship', to save Bobby's Sands' life.

Action from below

No, it is action from below that is needed in the South, the same sort of action that lit up the streets of Dublin nine years ago.

The key, North and South of the border, is strike action. This has already been organised in those sections of industry of the North with a majority nationalist population workforce. In the South nothing would embarrass Haughey more than strike action in solidarity in the North.

But strike action cannot be won on any widespread or sustained basis just by banging out the nationalist slogans taught in the southern schools as part of national history. The links have to be drawn between the everyday interests of workers in the South and the struggle in the North, between trade union rights and unemployment on one side of the border and wholesale repression on the other side of it.

Class politics have to be pushed to the fore, otherwise, defeat is indeed a possibility.

Of course the H-Block campaign does not represent the whole of the struggle in Ireland against the last vestiges of British imperialism; even if the issue of political status was won there would still be the British army of occupation, there would still be repression through all channels of government, there would still be discrimination against the catholic population in all areas of life. But it is important that the prisoners campaign is seen for what it is: the symbol of all these other issues, the symbol of British oppression and Irish resistance and the symbol of the fact that the struggle will continue until Britain gets out of Ireland once and for all. Even the *Daily Mirror* in a recent editorial recognised that the present crisis was nothing more than a symptom of the wider problem and it repeated its call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. It is up to socialists inside the trade union movement on both sides of the Irish Sea to ensure that this call becomes a reality.

Run down to a new civil war?

Peter Clarke analyses the situation in The Lebanon

The conflict in Lebanon is now seven years old. But it is on the brink of erupting into a new Middle East crisis as the sporadic fighting between the numerous protagonists reaches a new pitch.

Several factors during the last year had led to this situation. The first is the way the Gulf has diverted the attention of Jordan and Syria away from the Palestinian question. These two countries have been involved in a continuous sabre-rattling exercise as they have tried to exploit the unrest in the area to settle old scores. The pressure has been on the Syrian government to decrease its 'peace keeping' force of 25,000 troops in Lebanon in case they are needed against Iraq or Jordan.

The second factor, Israeli insurgency in Southern Lebanon, has been stepped up since Syria and Jordan became involved in their own dispute. The Israelis work very closely with, and arm, the 'Free Lebanon' forces of renegade Christian Phalangist, Saad Haddad. Haddad has controlled the ten-mile wide strip along the Israeli border for several years and has allowed the Israelis free access through the strip to attack the Palestinian strongholds just north of the Litani River. Last year there were 81 such attacks.

The third factor is the resurgence of the right wing Christian Phalangist forces in Beirut and Central Lebanon. The initial conflict between the Palestinians and the Phalangists reached its height in early 1976, when the Phalangists cleared the Palestinian refugee camp of Tal al-Zaabar. This led to the Syrian intervention, in face of which the Christian forces fragmented. Now the Christians are united again under the leadership of the extreme right wing Bechir Gemayel. Since recently eliminating the other Christian leaders in a week of bloody fighting, Gemayel has become the sole driving force in the Phalangist Lebanese Front Party.

Gemayel has some 70,000 well trained and well armed men at his disposal. In recent incidents he decimated the Palestinians at Mount Lebanon and drove back the newly rebuilt Lebanese army at Ain Rummaneh. Gemayel's aspiration is to 'liberate the rest of Lebanon from the Palestinians and the Syrians'.

The guns captured by this Palestinian fighter from Christian militia are Israeli.

The fourth factor is the one million strong Shiite population of Lebanon. These have always been oppressed by the Sunni Muslims and the Christians alike. For years they attempted to work for democratic reform within the old Lebanese political framework. But with the coming of the conflict and the success of their sect in Iran they have taken on a much harder edge: with the help of the Palestinians they have built up a military force and a strong political party, Amal, led by the very shrewd Nabih Berri, and the old feudal leaders of the Shiites have been eclipsed.

The Shiites mainly inhabit the Southern area of Lebanon had have been hard hit by the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Some 300,000 have left their homes and moved to Beirut as the fighting has escalated. This exodus has built up a resentment against the Palestinians – a resentment which Gemayel is trying to exploit by courting right wing and disenchanted elements within the Shiite community in an effort to get them to join him in a crusade against the Palestinians. He has said publicly that he cannot beat both the Palestinians and the Syrians without Shiite help.

The final factor is the so-called 'CIA plan' recently revealed in *The Middle East* magazine. The plan goes along the following lines: The Phalangists now in control of Mount Lebanon could drive the Palestinians out of West Beirut, clear their main camps around the airport and push them south. The Israelis would engage the Syrians in the southern area around Mount Hermon and up to the Karoun dam with the help of Haddad's Christian forces. This would leave the Palestinians by the Litani River surrounded as the Christians moving south and the Israelis moving north decimated them.

The CIA feel that the deteriating relations between Syria and Jordan plus the Iraqi involvement in the Gulf War would prevent Jordan or Iraq helping the Syrians out.

The plan is not in favour at the US state department, but the CIA apparently are trying to get Reagan to adopt it. According to sources in Beirut the recent clashes between the Syrians and the Phalangists in Zahle and between the Israelis and the Syrians in southern Bekaa are a prelude to the implementation of the plan.

What of the left in the Lebanon? Unfortunately, it is in tatters. Amal is split by internal disputes regarding the Palestinians, while the Baathists of Syria and Iraq, the Progressive Front of Walid Jumblatt, the Nasserites, the Partie Populaire Syrien and the Palestinians spend most their time fighting each other instead of the Phalangists and Israelis.

Reagan recently called Syria the 'Cuba of the Middle East'. If he adopts the CIA plan, the future for the Lebanon looks even bleaker than at present.

socialist REVIEW

SPECIAL OFFER

FREE with each new subscription to Socialist Review on this form a copy of OUR HISTORY - A POCKET HISTORY OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN by Steve Cherry

Send me 12 issues of Socialist Review starting with the .... issue.
I enclose £ ....

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Subscription rates for 12 issues
UK and Eire £7.50, Overseas Surface £8.50, Europe Air £10, Elsewhere Air £12.(Institutions add £4)

Return to Socialist Review, PO Bo[illegible]
London E2.
Make cheques payable to SW Distributors.

Losing her grip

Barry Pavier looks at the difficulties besetting Indira Gandhi

Margaret Thatcher would have been well advised to have taken a close look at the pickle that Indira Gandhi has got herself into, during her visit to India last month. Mrs Gandhi's predicament reveals the dangers of trying to impose a solution on your own class.

1) Since January 1980 there has been a violent racist campaign in progress in Assam in the north-east. This is led by the local petty bourgeoisie, and aims to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Bengalis who migrated there from what is now Bangladesh.

2) In Gujarat in the west there has been a similar movement in progress for three months, aimed at untouchables. This was sparked off by a dispute over reservation of medical school places for untouchable students. It is also led by the local petty bourgeoisie.

3) In large states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, independent farmers' movements have emerged which have mobilised tens of thousands in militant campaigns over prices, which have compelled the government to back down.

4) Rampant factionalism has appeared inside Congress (I) state governments. One problem is that is constant friction between Gandhi 'loyalists' and people who recently defected to the Congress (I). In Andhra Pradesh for instance, the chief minister had to create a cabinet of 60(!) just to keep all the factions happy. Hardly a week goes by without Mrs Gandhi having to intervene in a party crisis in some state or another.

5) On top of all this there are the workers. A two-month strike of public-sector workers was recently inconclusively settled. Perhaps the most surprising thing is not that it went on for so long but that it was not smashed up straight away. That is what happened to the last major national strike, the railway strike of 1974, and this time defence industries were out. That's not to say that there wasn't violence, but there was not the repression of previous years. Why?

At independence in 1947 the Indian ruling class was a coalition—a small industrial capitalist bourgeoisie and a large rural bourgeoisie. Large, but splintered. Splintered by region, within regions on caste or sub-regional lines, by differences between budding capitalists and rent receivers, and so on. These splinters had a political life as factions within the state units of the ruling Congress party and were led by regional bosses.

While India benefited from the world boom of the 50s and 60s these factions could be accommodated. There were some goodies for everyone, distributed via the state. When the boom ended (in the case of India, 1965), there was not enough for every faction. Politically, this manifested itself in splits from the Congress, firstly at the 1967 elections, and then intensifying, with a major split in 1969.

All this posed a problem for the ruling class as a whole. At the same time as it was subjected to internal dissention, and so a weakening of the state apparatus, there was a massive and unprecedented upsurge of worker and peasant militancy. A split ruling class made this situation very dangerous, and Indira Gandhi could only temporarily solve it in 1970-71 by a combination of centrally-directed repression, a successful war with Pakistan *and* an apparent move to the left, summed up by the famous '*garibi hatao*' (abolish poverty) election of 1971.

But this did not solve the problem of the inherent factionalism of the ruling class. Indira Gandhi had been given some freedom of manoeuvre by the fact that her major social base was a new element in the ruling class, created since independence—the managers of state capital. There are hundreds of thousands of these people—running the railways, the iron and steel industries, the defence industries, engineering industries, the nationalised banks and the auxiliary services of state capital like the educational system and the civil service. They tend to have certain political attributes—they despise the local bosses of Congress as corrupt bigots, they support ordered 'progress', they tend to support the USSR rather than the USA.

The Emergency was an attempt by the state capitalist bourgeoisie to solve the problem of ruling class factionalism by rigid centralisation. They had the support of private industrial capital in this. To succeed they had to smash the strength of the regional seats of power. To put it another way, Indira Gandhi had to destroy the old Congress party root and branch.

That is where the appalling Sanjay came in. Mrs Gandhi needed a Congress organisation in every state which would campaign and implement her policy. The local organisations were no use as they were controlled by the bosses. Sanjay's Youth Congress was intended to be a *national* organisation loyal only to his mother, a stick with which she could beat the bosses.

It didn't work, simply because the state capitalist bourgeoisie is not strong enough to fulfil its task. The Emergency collapsed in January 1977 when the biggest boss, Jagjivan Ram, defected to the opposition, and the whole regime fell in. The Janata and Lok Dal governments of 1977-80 only carried the fragmentation further—they were destroyed by factionalism. The Congress (I) won an overwhelming electoral victory in 1980, but one which concealed the truth of disintegration in the ruling class. Mrs Gandhi benefited to a great extent from divided opposition votes, and many of her 'supporters' were people who had just defected from her opponents (in Haryana state, the entire government turned up one morning and said today it had changed from being Janata to Congress (I)!). A sure recipe for trouble.

The policy of centralising the party either means that the leading figures are incapable sycophants, or that people with independent political strength are promptly hamstrung—whereupon they usually move into factionalism. The result is that not only can Indira Gandhi not suppress opposition movements in the country, she can't even suppress them in the Congress (I). The party is in chaos, Assam is ungovernable, farmers are rioting, and she has no remedy. The iron grip is slack. The police still murder, torture and maim, but unlike in the Emergency they do it to no unified purpose. The messages from Delhi are indecisive and confused.

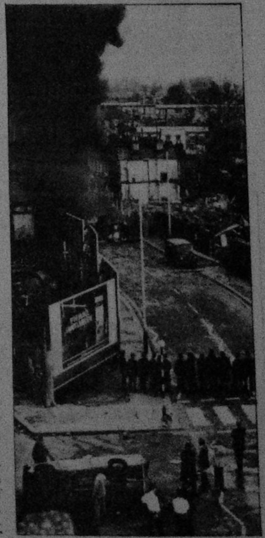
This gives a big opportunity to the working class. The traditional workers' organisations, the two Communist parties and their unions, are still hopelessly sunk in reformism. However, since 1977, there have developed in several important centres independent union movements, fighting militants and often successful struggles. In these movements small revolutionary groups have made significant interventions.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM ★ 12 SPRING 1981

Jonathon Neale - The Afghan Tragedy
Lindsey German - Theories of Patriarchy
Ray Challinor - PM McDouall and Physical Force Chartism
Alex Callinicos - Wage Labour and State Capitalism
S Freeman and B Vandesteeg - What is 'Unproductive Labour'?
Notes and Reviews on - Italian Fascism, Cabral's Marxism, Cohen's 'Karl Marx's Theory of History'

Out now £1.25 (plus 25p post) for single copy. 4 issue subscription UK and Eire £5, Overseas Surface £6, Europe Air £7, Elsewhere Air £9. From IS Journal, PO Box 82, London, E2.

A class riot not a race riot



The capitalist press were unanimous on two things: condemnation of the Brixton rioting and insistence that it was not a race riot. We don't agree with the first, but the second is undoubtedly true. What all of the evidence shows—eyewitness accounts, photographs, reports—is that the Brixton riot was a rising against property and authority. It was an elemental confused and directionless riot by a mainly working class community against the symbols of oppression and deprivation—it was a *class* riot. Colin Sparks examines the difference between the two sorts of riot.

A brief glance at the evidence proves that beyond doubt. Overwhelmingly the targets were the police and the large chain stores. Photographs of the first incident on the Saturday—the police attempt to arrest a black taxi driver at around 4.45 in the 'Frontline' area—show a crowd of blacks and whites gathering to free him. The photograph of the first attack on a police vehicle shows black and white youths working together to overturn it. The photographs of the peak of the struggle show blacks and whites fighting the cops together. Even the damage toll demonstrates the enemy: sixty-one police vehicles were damaged, as against only nineteen private vehicles.

A race riot would have had very different dynamics. There have been race riots in Britain since the war, and they are all, without exception, attacks by whites upon blacks. Race riots are something different from the sickening daily toll of abuse, assault and murder which the black community in Britain suffers at the hands of white racists. They involve organised attempts by gangs of people to attack, indiscriminately, people of another ethnic origin. These have happened on a number of occasions.

The best known example is the 1958 Notting Hill riot where white youths, egged on by Oswald Mosely, launched a series of street attacks on the local black community.

There are other, less well-known exam-

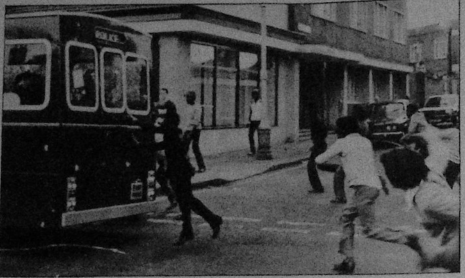


Photo: John Sturrock

The targets of a class riot are not individuals of another race, but symbols of the authority and property which oppress. (Above) Chasing a police van in Brixton. (Below) Burnt out bank in St Pauls.

ples. In Dudley in July 1962 a Saturday night fight between a black man and a white man led to the minor injury of the white man. The next day a group of whites 'went on the hunt for coloured persons'. On the Monday at around 10.30 pm: 'It seems that a pre-conceived plan ... was put into effect. They met on Castle Hill, armed with sticks, staves, chair legs, belts, coshes and bottles and made their way from Castle Street to Birmingham Street... their numbers increased as other rowdies joined them.'

The police intervened 'to protect coloured persons from the violence of the mob' and twenty seven men and two women, all white, appeared in court the next day. A mob of about two hundred made an ineffectual effort to free them, allegedly shouting at the police 'You flatfoots' and 'You cowards'. 15 more whites were arrested.

The same weekend there were similar events in Dalston and Manchester, where Oswald Mosely was again active.

In Leeds in July 1969 there was a fight which led to three Sikhs being charged for the murder of a white man. It also led to three nights of rioting during which 35 white men were arrested. On the Sunday lunchtime, crowds of whites gathered outside the pubs yelling: 'We are going to smash Pakistani houses' and 'We want a riot'. A mob marched down the Burley Road, chanting "Sieg Heil' and 'Get the wogs'. They attacked a small immigrant area, wrecking shops and chasing any black they could find.

Sharp contrasts

These examples stand in sharp contrast with Brixton, St Pauls, and the Carnival riots in Notting Hill in 1977 and 1978, in which there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that the aim of the riots was indiscriminate attacks upon white people. The differences are systematic. In the case of race riots, there are attempts to march into black areas. Class riots are defences of a particular area against the police. Race riots fold up very quickly when the police manage to notice them and intervene: in Dudley, eight police officers stopped a mob of about 200. Class riots typically are fought with great courage and determination against an overwhelming array of police power. Race riots are aimed at catching and attacking isolated individual blacks. Class riots are directed against an organised police force.

That the psychology and the politics of the two sorts of riots are quite different was proved time and again in the black struggles of the USA in the 1960s. The Civil Rights movement in the South was subjected to a catalogue of atrocities. It was not all peaceful protest, but when the blacks fought back, they did so against their direct enemies. For example, in September 1963 there was a bomb attack on the home of a black minister in Birmingham, Alabama. The protest march was attacked by the police and developed into a riot. 10 days later, white racists bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church during Sunday School. They killed four black school girls and seriously injured another 23.

The following years saw riots in the black ghettoes in the North. Watts, Newark, Detriot, Cleveland and a host of others exploded in a wave of Black anger. In 1967 there were 164 civil disturbances. The Kerner Commission investigated them exhaustively and concluded that they were directed;

> 'Against local symbols of white American society, authority and property in Negro neighbourhoods—rather than against the white persons.'

Even when Martin Luther King was shot down by racists and Washington DC was subdued by 12,000 troops, there were no examples of black race riots.

There is absolutely no doubt that the trigger of the Brixton riots was pulled by the police. The area has notoriously been subjected to intense racist policing. The SPG has invaded the area six times between 1975 and 1979, and Lambeth Council have extensively documented the damage that they and the 'ordinary' police have done to black people.

The Brixton riots erupted at the end of the first week of an operation called 'Swamp 81', in which the area was flooded with more than 100 temporary plain-clothes cops. In two days, they stopped more than 1000 people and arrested more than 100—twice the normal weekly average. On both the Friday and the Saturday, the riots started after particularly atrocious examples of police harassment.

So obvious is this that even some bourgeois journalists have recognised it. Keith Waterhouse, in the *Daily Mirror* (13.4.81) noted the remark by a senior police officer that:

> 'Nobody rules the streets of London, Brixton, or even Railton Road, except the Metropolitan Police.'

He commented:

> 'Which could have been more modestly put, given that portions of one of London's boroughs were ablaze at the time. Or less arrogantly put, given that as a matter of fact the police of this country do not as yet rule anything.'
>
> 'But it is the belief of some of them that they do... and their tendency to rule some streets rather more strenuously than they try to rule others, that has brought the seething discontent in Brixton to a head.'

The police, of course, are only the sharp end of a mass of things bearing down on the population of Brixton. The misery of unemployment and bad housing, of the general decay of capitalist system, is something that both blacks and whites rioted against together. But blacks, of course, have more than their fair share of this grim lot, and also bear the burden of everyday racism. That is why it was they who led and dominated the riot and who provided the best and bravest troops.

Riots of this kind are a common result of unemployment and crisis, which is why Thatcher is lying when she tries to blame it on the ethnic origins of the Brixton militants. There were numerous such riots in the 1930's, of which the great united struggle between the Protestant and Catholic unemployed in Belfast against the RUC is the best known. Birkenhead is another good example. There, in September 1932, two unemployed demonstrations demanding the ending of the Means Test were broken up by baton charges. This led to a massive protest meeting which was again attacked by the police. The report in *The Times* as to what happened next could almost have been written about Brixton in 1981:

> 'During what amounted to a series of pitched battles between the mob and the police nine officers and seven other persons were taken to hospital... The police tried to break up the mob, but were met with a rain of bottles, stones, lumps of lead, hammer-heads and other missiles... Wherever the police were seen sweeping up a street the rioters disappeared into houses, from the windows of which women threw all kinds of missiles... In one street the manhole cover of a sewer was lifted and a wire rope stretched across the street. A number of police fell over this ... One of the motor omnibuses conveying police reinforcements had all its windows broken.'

The fighting went on for three days before the police were able to baton the population into a state of silence.

Brixton, then, was an absolutely typical product of two linked circumstances. On the one hand there is rising unemployment, misery and desperation. On the other hand there is the racism of British society which drives young blacks into implacable opposition to every manifestation of white authority. A logic follows from this: that St Pauls in Bristol and Brixton in London are the harbingers of further storms. The conditions which exist in those places are conditions which exist in a dozen other places. The anger and militancy which burst out there will burst out in a dozen other places.

'It is important to take the iniative'

Socialist Review went to Brixton to interview three SWP members about their assessment of the riot, its origins, development and what has happened since. We spoke to two black workers, Mickey and Tyrone, and a white worker, Tom. This is what they had to say.

Mickey: One of the main factors that led up to it was the police harrassment of the youth, which has been taking place for the last three years or so. It has been really heavy. Even Lambeth Council produced a report on the atrocities that the police are getting up to.

I work just up the road and in the last few weeks, just driving around the area, I've seen kids up against the wall, being patted down, cars being stopped. Every single time it was a black kid. You could tell just by looking at the people around that they had seen it all before. It was a common occurence.

Tyrone: Its not just the kids, its the whole of the people. And not just in Brixton. Coming home from a party, they stop your car and find out if you've had too much to drink. When they can't pin that on you, then there's always something else, like they've missed a car that answers your's description. If you've got a very good car, then stopping you is one of the things the police do when they're on their night out for harrassing blacks.

Tom: I am white and living in Brixton and I have it easy compared with black people I know, but even white people are fed up. I know white people who won't go out at night, not because Brixton is some sort of 'muggers' haven' but because they go out and have a pint and then get picked up by the police and taken down the station.

The New Cross Fire cover up and the reporting of the march just proved to people that there was no way they could make themselves heard.

Tyrone: The riot on Friday started when they saw the police put this kid who had been stabbed into a police car. They knew he was going to die in their hands. They remember Michael Ferrarra, who was stabbed in the streets of Hackney and taken not to the hospital but to the police station where he died from loss of blood. People haven't forgotten that.

Mickey: The riot itself was mostly youth. On the Sunday it was really young kids—ten to fourteen—just running around getting what they could. It was a fair cross-section of younger people, black and white. I met two older white men, one about 45, another about 22. They had been in the riot. They said that the police had caught them with about a dozen black kids in a shop doorway and pulled the two of them out behind their riot shields before they started laying into the black kids. The police were only interested in nicking black kids.

Some of the places that went up were racist. I've heard it said that the reason the *Windsor Castle* was burnt down was because it was racist. A lot of the shops that went up did so because the people who run them are right-wingers who want nothing to do with the area.

Tom Its interesting that there's a lot of shops with valuable goods that did not get hit at all. No doubt some of them got hit accidentally, but the shops that got rioted were the ones that had the type of things a young unemployed kid would want but could never pay for.

Tyrone: When you look at Brixton after the riot, its not much worse than it ever was. It always looked that way. The people who saw Railton Road after the riot don't know that it always looked pretty much like that.

On the night itself, I was looking to see who was angry about it all. I was looking especially for white people who were angry and had reasons for being angry. I did not see anything of that on the streets. The only thing that people did not understand was the burning, because fire is a dangerous thing and I wouldn't like it much myself. People were saying: 'It had to happen'—black and white people.

Mickey: After the riot, Rudi Narayan (a black barrister) was the first one to show his head. He pops up everywhere he can get himself a platform. He set up a defence committee with a few of the local race relations bodies. They called a meeting on the Sunday, right in the middle of a riot. The meeting broke up; there was a riot right outside the building with people throwing rocks and screaming, and everybody ran out of the building.

There was another meeting the following day. By that time Narayan had gone around the area and him and the local community relations people had elected each other to different positions on the committee.

But a wider circle of people had found out about it and had gone along. The whole thing ended in total disarray. It wasn't very difficult to see what Narayan was up to—he is after a knighthood, or something.

Tyrone: After two weeks, there still is not a working defence committee set up. We will

get something going eventually, but at the moment there is only the work in the law centre. We don't even know how many people were arrested. There is still a rumour going around that there are fifty people unaccounted for.

Mickey: In London there is a large group of black nationalists, all of whom want to play a part in this sort of thing. They were saying that it should be an all-black committee, which broke up the first public meeting because there were white people in the audience. By having an all-black committee, the nationalists thought they could keep it small and manipulate it. You get the feeling that everybody wants to be a star.

You've got to remember that everybody wants the youth to be involved, but those youth themselves don't want to be involved in any political scene. They've had no real experience of organisation. Down the Frontline, there's no real organisation, there's a 'togetherness' but it doesn't represent any political organisation.

You get various people, like *Race Today*, who think there should be an all-black defence committee, but even they can't control the youth. After they had got rid of Narayan, and Linton Kwesei Johnstone had set himself up as the chairman and had got a few of the youth around him, the meeting ended in total disorder. The kids are very, very militant—at the end of that meeting they wanted to march on the police station they would have supported anything.

Despite the fact that there is no defence committee yet, it is important that we take the initiative and go out and raise some money. You're talking about something like £100,000. No committee is going to raise that if we have a repetition of what we've seen so far.

Tyrone: There has been no back-lash from the older people. For example, we were selling *Socialist Worker* the next weekend at Brixton tube. it was a record sale, and we had no insults from black or white. The police were there, and if the people has been complaining we would have been moved on. The people did not show any anguish at all. People felt that it had to happen.

Mickey: The only place there has been any room to intervene has been at the defence committee public meetings. The white left has been kept out, and if you look at the black left, they are all living off one sort of grant or another. Their politics are geared very much in line with their wage packets.

For example, there are no links being drawn—very little mention of Deptford, no mention of South African miners being shot, no mention of the big demonstration against the Nationality Bill, you look around in general and there are no links being drawn. The black nationalists attempted to isolate Brixton: first you had to be black; then you had to come from Brixton; then you had to come from Railton Road; then you had to come from top end of Railton Road; then you had to come from the Frontline. In the end it excluded everybody apart from the kids themselves.

An all-black committee is all very well, but it makes it difficult to mobilise a much wider section of the class. You go to any workplace around Brixton and you will meet racists. But just because there are racists there, it doesn't mean that you mustn't organise within them. it's no good saying: 'Their all a bunch of shits where I work'. That lets people talk themselves out of almost any activity. They end up involved in law courts like the Deptford Committee.

Tom: I work in a place with about 1300 people. To tell you the truth, the Monday after the riot it was a hell of a time. We had to work very hard to keep the open racialism down. We had people saying things like: 'They should all have been machine-gunned'. You had to argue with them, show them cuttings and pictures out of the papers, and prove to them that it was blacks and whites. We really had to fight against them. We carried the arguments on the Monday and the Tuesday, and since then it has been alright. The first thing is to win the argument that it is unemployment and the rest, and not an ethnic minority.

Mickey: You can collect in the workplaces. We proved that over the Richard Campbell campaign. We went to Brixton garage, which is about seventy per cent black, and the white stewards, right wingers, told us no-one was interested. We had to go underneath them to the rank and file, who were interested.

Another place we went to was a hospital with a racist shop steward. We managed to get into the AGM, with about 100 people there. When we had finished speaking, there were people coming up and signing the petition and offering to help. We will have to do the same sort of thing around Brixton.

Bristol one year after St. Pauls

Almost exactly a year before Brixton, the St Paul's area in Bristol was catapulted to prominence nationally and internationally. A small incident, a police raid on a café, led to seven hours during which the police were stoned, cars were burnt, shops were looted and, horror upon horrors, the police had to withdraw, leaving behind a no-go area. While everyone had expected some disturbance at some point, the intensity of the anger and the spontaneity of the local people caught them unawares.

St Paul's has also traditionally been a staging post where people have settled before moving on to other areas of Bristol. So it was here that the West Indian community started after the war, with the settlement of people who had served in the RAF. Today only 5000 of the city's 20,000 West Indians live in the area. However, the recession has put paid to any further movement away from St Paul's.

At the same time the lack of funds for housing improvement has led to it becoming what the locals call a 'shanty town', a description that fits parts of every major city in Britain. Urban deprivation and racial disadvantage exist in all these areas, and all that is needed is the spark of provocation by the police to turn any one of then into the next Bristol or Brixton.

These, then, were the reasons behind the upheaval—unemployment, bad housing and education, discrimination, continual police harassment. A year later, no solution to any of these problems has been presented by the authorities.

Immediately after the riot, MPs, councillors and social workers moved in. Draft reports were produced. It took Avon Education Authority and the Community Relations Executive six months just to thrash out a simple policy statement. A Commons committee investigating racial disadvantage visited the area to take evidence from the local people. Many refused to help because they wanted a public enquiry and felt there was little it could do. A trade union enquiry was initiated by the Bristol trades council with locals as well as some celebrities. A defence committee was also formed.

The problem was, and is, that the trade union enquiry and the defence campaign, run by a separatist who didn't want whites involved, never came together. The workers were not asked to contribute to the defence costs and a joint campaign against the police activities and Tory policies was never contemplated.

Since the initial burst of 'activity', the talk has been of forming more committees, working parties, liasion groups, for further consultations. The Tory council seems to be well pleased with its major proposal. After 'detailed considerations', part of St Barnabas primary school would be converted into a community centre.

There are now available to the people five community centres, community social workers, detached youth wokers, a multi-racial education centre and a careers centre. Yet, the problems of St Paul's are too deep rooted for centres and new coats of paint on houses to solve. Some trees have been planted, landscape gardeners have been busy and some streets have been blocked off to deter kerb crawlers.

Unemployment—25 per cent last year—is now nearing 40 per cent. The Royal Docks face closure throwing 2000 dockers on the dole and affecting the livelihood of another 20,000. The shops in the area are as delapidated as the houses, and one or two are still burnt out and boarded up. Lloyds Bank has moved across the road to occupy a disused church. There is a rumour that the scorched bank premises will now house St Paul's very own police station. Just what the community most needed.

Bippin Patel

From riot to revolution

But how do we move from riot to revolution? Bristol left very little in the way of continuing organisation in St Pauls. What guarantee is there that things will be very different after Brixton? Chris Harman **looks at some of the problems to be faced in drawing the political and organisational lessons.**

Britain has two images in 1981. One is the politics of irrelevance. In its most absurd form it involves the surge of support in the opinion polls for the Social Democrats, the soap suds party launched with an expensive media operation but having no policies but a regurgitation of the slogans of the Macmillan era of 25 years ago. But it is also to be found on the left. Over the last week we've seen sane socialists forgetting everything the experience of the Wilson and Callaghan governments should have taught them, believing that the second coming can be brought about by a reborn municipal socialism and lower bus fares. Those who used to storm through the streets chanting Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh now tell us that the only important issue to be argued out in unions whose members face soaring redundancies and six per cent wage limits is which former senior cabinet minister is to be deputy leader of the Labour party.

Apathy to anger

The other image is of the brick and the petrol bomb, the police boot and the baton charge, the bodies clubbed down into the gutter and the screams of defiance, the explosion of St Paul's in Bristol a year ago and Brixton in London a month ago, echoed in Finsbury Park and Wanstead and Ealing and who knows where next.

Both images convey something very real about Britain today. The politics of irrelevance follow from the way in which the majority of workers still don't know how to respond to the crisis and the government. As factory after factory has closed, as the isolated outposts of resistance have remained isolated, as even the memory of the odd victories (the docks, the mines, the firemen) is drowned in the redundancies rational responses are replaced by blind hope.

Yet Brixton shows a deeper reality. Those without hope are capable suddenly, virtually out of nowhere, of shifting from apathy to anger. And that anger can break through all the restraints that education within capitalist society is supposed to build into people's consciousness. The local streets suddenly take on the aspect of a revolutionary battleground, with barricades and burning cars and instant solidarity against the state.

However, if the riot shows, momentarily, the face of real revolution, the riot is not the same as the revolution. The power of the rioters lies in their ability to drive the police from the streets and to burn down symbols of oppression. But the streets they briefly control are streets of poverty. They burn down parts of the old society but do not have the means to build a new one. For those means lie elsewhere, in the productive core of society, the factories and mines and docks.

That is where a riot differs from a strike. It can be much more revolutionary in its slogans. But it leaves behind much less in the way of continuing, organised opposition to the status quo.

A strike takes place at the very centre of capitalist society, where value is created and surplus value is extracted. It shows workers that they have the power, if only they act collectively, to begin to control these processes in their own interests. A riot shows people they can fight together, it teaches some of them that they need to challenge society in its entirety—but it does not provide them with the organisational means, the power, to achieve these goals.

This problem is exacerbated by another one. A community is not a class, even if most of its members might belong to the working class. Also to be found in it are the shop keepers, the lumpen proletarians, the petty gangsters, the upwardly mobile—and those who hope to make a comfortable living as the professional mediators between the community and the wider capitalist society. The moment the riot is over these go their separate ways, each proclaiming its particular aims as the aim of the community as a whole.

That is why a succession of ghetto uprisings could sweep the US between 1964 and 1968—and, at the end, leave the black communities hardly any better organised than before, with former radical black nationalists treading the path of black capitalism and black capitalist politics.

The road from riot to revolution requires a detour that leads through the factories.

The detour is not impossible to make. An important section of the rioters may have been unemployed. But the majority were almost certainly workers. After all, despite the very high levels of black unemployment the great majority of black people in Britain—and even the majority of black youth—have jobs. The biggest single concentration of black people in London is not to be found in Brixton, but in the Ford factory at Dagenham. And the white youth who joined in likewise have fathers and sisters and friends on assembly lines and behind office typewriters.

At the moment conditions may not be quite right for the wholesale transformation of apathy into anger in the factories. But all past experience indicates that the moment there is the slightest upturn in the economy, this can be magnified into a much greater rise in the level of class stuggle. We could find ourselves faced with dozens of industrial Brixtons.

Illustration: Sophie

Shift the ground

To make the transition from riot to revolution, you not only have to shift the ground of battle. You also have to make a political shift. The politics of the community is no good in the factory—whether you are talking of the hardline black nationalism that can so easily get a resonance among those who face daily racial harassment, or the half-baked municipal socialism that goes begging to the government for more funds.

What is needed is thorough going revolutionary socialist politics, a stress that the factories as well as the streets have to be seized, that does not tell black people to abandon their grievances while white workers have a change of heart, but which does insist that to be effective, vanguard street fighters have to learn to talk to and lead and organise older workers as well as the youth, white workers as well as black.

The urgent task is to build organisation based on such politics, before further explosions take place. Brixton revealed—as Micky noted in the interview above—that everyone with politics is an outsider as far as the most radical youth in Brixton are concerned, whether that politics is socialist or separatist. No-one has won their confidence and been able to articulate their anger into a wider view of how to transform society. Yet unless that is done, their anger can all too easily sink back into apathy.

The key here is making contact with those individuals who are beginning to see the need for some wider perspective. That is why we in the SWP put such a stress on the regular sale of our weekly paper, *Socialist Worker* in a period like the present. If we can sell it to those looking for an alternative in the communities and in the factories, we make the connection between the two. We can channel the anger of Bristol and Brixton in the direction where it is most likely to be effective. We can unite those, black and white, who want to struggle. We can destroy the politics of irrelevance with the politics of revolt.

The Thirties and the Eighties

With the March unemployment figures at an official level of 2.5 million for the first time since the 1930s (the real total is much higher), the demand 'No Return to the Thirties' sounds a bit out of date. But what was the nature of unemployment in the thirties? Is the situation today the same? Sue Cockerill looks at the facts then and now.

Just as today the official statistics underestimated the true extent of unemployment, both because not everyone who would take a job registers (particularly married women), and because of the various schemes for temporary 'work' for school-leavers, the unemployment figures in the thirties underestimated the real numbers by half a million or more.

Total figures for unemployment, adjusted to make them more accurate, are available. Using these figures, unemployment reached a peak of 3.4 million in 1932, but in only two years between 1922 and 1938 did it drop below 1.5 million, and then only slightly. And this was at a time when the total workforce was smaller than today. In every one of these years, at least one in ten people of working age was jobless. In seven of the years, three out of every twenty, and in the worst years, one in five.

Unemployment had reached near these levels before, in the troughs of periodic slumps, but never for such long periods of time. For a whole generation, mass unemployment was the normal state of affairs. Among the many books which describe more graphically than any figures what life was like in the worst hit areas in the thirties is George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*. For example the desperate search for scraps of coal among the pit waste in Wigan by unemployed people:

> 'That scene stays in my mind as one of my pictures of Lancashire: the dumpy, shawled women, with their sacking aprons and heavy black clogs, kneeling in the cindery mud and the bitter wind, searching eagerly for tiny chips of coal. In winter they are desperate for fuel; it is more important almost than food. Meanwhile all round, as far as the eye can see, are the slag heaps and hoisting gear of the collieries, and not one of those collieries can sell all the coal it is capable of producing.'

He writes also about the savage enforcement of the Means Test:

> 'Old people, sometimes bedridden, are driven out of their homes by it. An old age pensioner, if a widower, would normally live with one or other of his children. Under the Means Test, however, he counts as a 'lodger' and if he stays, his children's dole will be docked. So, perhaps at seventy or seventy-five, he has to turn out into lodgings, handing his pension over to the lodging house keeper and existing on the verge of starvation.'

The total figures for unemployment show only part of the story. Particular regions and industries were catastrophically affected. In 1934, 37% of the labour force in Glamorgan, 75% in Brynmawr, 70% in Merthyr, were out of work. After Palmers shipyard in Jarrow closed in 1933, eight out of ten workers in Jarrow were unemployed. Even after the slight recovery of the late thirties began, areas like South Wales, Central Scotland, Northern Ireland, and parts of the North-East and Lancashire remained devastated by unemployment.

Unemployment by industry
January 1981

Steel	22.4%
Textiles	14.8
Clothing & footwear	14.0
Bricks, pottery, glass & cement	10.7
Motor vehicles	10.8
Food, drink & tobacco	10.4
Mechanical engineering	10.2
Shipbuilding	10.2

The worst hit industry was shipbuilding and repairing, where at the depth of the slump (1932), 62% of the workforce was jobless. Forty-eight per cent of steel and ironworkers were unemployed, and 35% of coalminers. About a third of the labour force in textiles, building and the docks were also without work.

The problem of understatement of female unemployment was probably even worse then than it is now: women represented 29% of the economically active population, but only 17% of the recorded unemployed in 1935.

It took the outbreak of war to end mass unemployment: by 1940, only 700,000 people were jobless, and by 1944, 70,000. Many people believed that with the end of the war, it would return. Instead came the long boom, fed by continuing massive arms expenditure. Now the boom is over, mass unemployment has re-emerged.

Devastation

In many ways, the pattern of unemployment hasn't changed: looking at the regional figures for February 1981, 7% of the workforce is unemployed in the South East, as compared with 13.6% in the North, 13.5% in Wales, 12.7% in Scotland, and 17.3% in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland hasn't in fact had a rate of unemployment below 6% during the whole post-war period).

An important exception to the pattern is the West Midlands, which has normally had an unemployment rate below the national average, but now has a percentage rate of 11.7 compared to the UK average of 10.2.

Even within regions, there are wide disparities: Cardiff has an unemployment rate of 11.7%, while it is 17.9% in Ebbw Vale. In Scotland, Edinburgh is 8.7%, North Lanarkshire 18.3% and Irvine 21.1%. It is hardly surprising that Corby has a rate of 21.5%, while Northamptonshire as a whole has a rate of 10.5%. Liverpool has 16.2% unemployed and within particular areas of the city, worse than that. Even in the relatively unaffected South East, there are pockets of very high unemployment in the inner city areas of London, for example, and also in places like Chatham (11.2%) and several coastal towns. Although none of these figures approaches those quoted earlier for South Wales and the North East in the thirties, (excepting areas of Northern Ireland) they represent whole communities devasted in the same ways.

Scrap heap

The worst-hit single industry is construction, with 24.5% out of work. 700,000 people were out of work in manufacturing in February, or 9.6%. Production industries account for half those out of work, manufacturing for a little under a third. But the service sector has also been hit: nearly 600,000 people were unemployed in the distributive trades, banking and other services, not including 100,000 in national and local government, and another 100,000 in transport and communication in February.

In terms of age, 38% of the unemployed are under 24, 18.3% under 19. 32% of male school-leavers and 30% of female were out of work in 1980. The government has been keeping some kids off the register by a number of different methods like YOP and Work Experience which often mean cheap labour for employers and six weeks off the dole for kids, who are then thrown back on the scrap heap and another batch put on the scheme to keep the figures down. In the second quarter of 1980, 47,000 school-leavers were on some kind of Manpower Services scheme. There are other job assistance programmes, short-time working subsidies and so on, which keep about 345,000 people off the register in total.

Women

Women now account for about 30% of the total unemployed and for 22% of those unemployed for six months or more. The shift in employment during the past decade to the service sector was matched by an increasing number of women entering the workforce. The female workforce increased by a million in the 70s, or about the same amount as the working population as a whole. The number of women actually employed rose by about a million, while the total numbers in employment remained constant. The rising number of women among the unemployed reflects the increased importance of women in the workforce, but it is difficult to measure how unemployment is affecting women because of the fact that married women often don't register as unemployed, on losing their jobs. Nor can the figures measure those who would work if there were jobs available, but see no point in registering if they are not entitled to benefit. The rate of increase of female unemployment has been faster in the last year than male, but the recorded rate of unemployment for men remains much higher: 12.1% as against 7.0% for women.

Heartlands

There is no doubt that the level of benefits for unemployed people today has meant that the situation is not comparable with what people suffered in the thirties. But the government's effective cuts in benefit in the last budget, the phasing out of Earnings Related Supplement, and the deliberate raising of fuel prices, together with the fact that a growing number of people have been unemployed for 6 months or more (38% of the total) will be hitting the living standards of the unemployed hard. Another difference between the situation today and the thirties is that prices fell during the thirties, whereas they have been and still are rising today.

The similarities with the thirties are there clearly: in terms of the fact that the recession has again hit the traditional sectors of industry hardest, mainly in the regions which were affected before. Steel, textiles, shipbuilding—all in the traditional heartlands of industry. But not only those industries. In the thirties, jobs were created in motors and light engineering in the Midlands and South while they were being destroyed in the heavy industry of the North. This time round these industries have been heavily hit, as have the so-called 'growth' sectors like chemicals and computers. Areas like the Midlands and the South East have not escaped.

No vacancies

Another major difference is the speed with which unemployment has risen: by 65% in the last year, compared to the steadier rise during the twenties and thirties. Partly because of this, and partly becaue of the level of benefits, the effect on both the unemployed and the employed has been different, at least so far. There is not yet the despair which comes from the belief that you are facing literally a lifetime on the dole; nor is there quite the feeling among the employed that they are on the edge of the abyss. Mass unemployment has not succeeded in stifling all fight among the employed.

But although unemployment has risen sharply, there are no signs that it will fall sharply. Even though the recssion is said to have 'bottomed out', all forecasters agree that the upturn will have little impact on unemployment levels, and that unemployment will rise still more by 1985. The two most recent forecasts by the ITEM group and the Cambridge Economic Policy Group forecast adult unemployment of 3.5 and 3.6 million by 1983, and Cambridge forecast 4.3 million by 1985. (*Guardian* 27.4.81). The *Economist Intelligence Unit* recently produced a report which suggested that mass unemployment would now be a permanent feature not just of the British economy, but of all the major industrialised world. The latest figures bear out this by showing the lowest level of vacancies since the figures were first compiled twenty years ago.

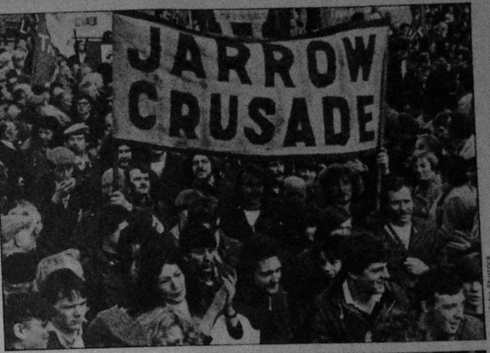


Photo: John Sturrock

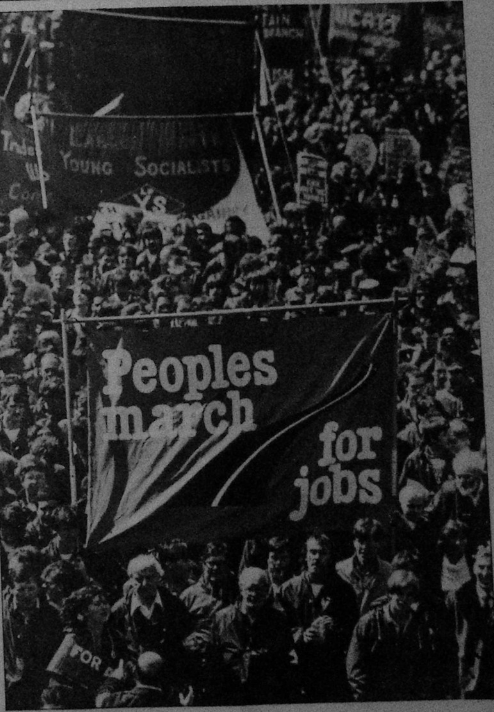


Photo: John Sturrock

'The only people that can talk about a future for mankind are marxists and we shouldn't be ashamed to say so'

As the NW TUC's People's March got under way, Mike Gonzales, went to talk to Harry McShane for *Socialist Review*. Harry represents a link with a chapter of working class history that is all too relevant for socialists today. For he was a central figure in the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, the mass organisation of the unemployed that campaigned throughout the inter-war period. The lessons of that movement must be absorbed today, for in its successes and failures it represents the highest experience of self-organisation of the unemployed that Britain has ever seen.

Harry McShane is 90 years old this month. His life is an inspiring example to us all—'of a rank and file leader who never left the rank and file'. A leading member of the Communist Party for thirty years, he left at the age of sixty in order to remain faithful to the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. He is still very active, fighting for the unity of unemployed and employed workers and for a socialist society.

Harry began by describing the NUWM campaign.

'The first unemployed march was in 1922. It was a ragged thing, and I couldn't be on it; I was in jail at the time. The 1930 march wasn't a lot better, but after that the marches were very good. In 1932 we got a tremendous response; there were three marches in the thirties, and they were outstanding. The discipline was excellent.

We got a form of democracy I've never seen before in the movement. We never took a decision without consulting all the marchers. We sometimes expelled a marcher, but that was always taken to a full meeting. And if there were any obstacles on the road—with the police or anything like that—we would call a meeting of everybody and discuss the tactics. In the end, the police always seemed to retreat.

We fed ourselves along the road, too, which the people won't have to do this time. We took collections in every town. We didn't collect in the factories then, but we took street collections, and held meetings at night wherever we stopped. But I don't think we went through hardship. As a matter of fact, I think the marchers were happier and better fed than they were at home.

The TUC, the trades councils—none of them would touch us until 1936. As a matter of fact, before 1936 I can remember that Mary Sutherland used to go ahead of us telling the Labour Party not to support us because the march was organised by communists. But we got working class support, and we never wanted for anything.

After 1936, we did get Labour Party support, when Attlee spoke at the Hyde Park rally. At that time the Jarrow march was on, and we met and exchanged speakers with them. And when we got to London, they had formed a march council that included people like Aneurin Bevan and Jennie Lee.

How does the experience of the twenties and thirties bear upon the present People's March? We asked Harry what he thought about the current march's emphasis on the churches.

We never had anything to do with religion at that time. What we did do was to take the unemployed round the churches on a Sunday morning, to demonstrate what the situation was. But we never went *into* the churches. On weekday evenings we would go round the hotels, so that people could see how bad the situation really was.

There were one or two ministers here and there who identified with the movement. Most of them were just sentimental socialists. Here in Scotland there was an Englishman who worked in Scotland—Tom Pickering. He came on one of the marches, but he didn't behave like a clergyman; in fact he never referred to the Church. He was the one who said to me one day, as we were leaving Preston, that he hoped, when he got to heaven, that the front row would be occupied by the comrades from the Communist International. Pickering had actually fought with the unemployed back in 1908, and got his head battered for it.

And what did he think of the overall orientation of the march, a 'People's' March rather than a march of unemployed workers?

Well, that's typical of the TUC isn't it. Tom Mann used to poke fun at the TUC then, and it was nowhere near as bad as it is now; if Mann were alive now, he'd have something to talk about. This man Murray's got no socialist principles at all, and the General Council's terrible.

Not only did the TUC oppose us, but they tried to form a separate unemployed organisation, which is what they're doing now. They tried to form them through the trades councils, but they never materialised.

What's happening now is that the Labour Party are trying to forestall us. They are afraid of any big movement. I think, for instance, that the Right to Work Campaign should have formed a national organisation. I'm not complaining about what's been done—and the chance will come again afterwards. Because these folk—the TUC and all the rest—have no staying power, they haven't the guts to face up to opposing the authorities. And I think that in the future the Right to Work will have tremendous success. They have to keep going, because they will be the only consistent people. The TUC and the Labour Party will have their demonstration, and then it will fizzle out.

They don't have the staying power or the people to keep it afloat—too many of them are concerned with getting themselves into parliament. So the Right to Work mustn't slow down.

We must support the march of course. Any division in the struggle against Thatcher would be a bad thing. You have to fight on a national level, and you have to fight with all the workers regardless of whether they are members of the Labour Party or not. But that's why we need the Right to Work. Because I don't think this People's March is much more than an expression of religious sympathy for the unemployed.

Last night, speaking on television, Michael Foot was talking about unemployment, that it would be with us for a long time to come. For the first time, he was admitting that unemployment is permanent under capitalism. He had no solution to offer. And we can't raise people's hopes—we have to make propaganda and say clearly that there can be no solution to the problem of unemployment under capitalism. We have to argue that alongside the fight to improve the conditions of the unemployed, we must fight all the time to change the system. That's the only solution.

I get annoyed sometimes, you know, because we forget how strong we are. Theoretically, we are the strongest people there are. We should be challenging every other school of thought to come and put their cards on the table and debate with us. Because the only people that can talk about a future for mankind are the Marxists—and we shouldn't be ashamed to say so.

The labour movement is bigger than the Labour Party. For us the issue is working class unity. We never put up any barriers on our marches, and we must not now. Of course we must try to get people to join the union, to play their part. But it is workers involved in struggle that we want. At the moment there is demoralisation, and some working people want to buy their own way out for a few pounds. In that situation, principles go by the board. But we've got that nucleus of Marxists, and if they're doing their job we have nothing to fear. I think we can win.

Lessons from Naples

Naples in the south of Italy has been called the Calcutta of Europe — so bad are the conditions of life in the city. Chief among the social deprivations that it suffers is unemployment. Official figures record some 200,000 unemployed, 20% of the working population. But this figure is almost certainly a great under-estimation. There is no comprehensive system of social security in Italy and the lack of prospects for getting a job mean that there is little incentive to register as unemployed. Yet the city was the focus of probably the biggest movement of the unemployed in Western Europe. It threw up tactics, lessons and above all inspirations which can be useful in the struggle in Britain today. Jack Fuller looks at them.

The start of the movement was inauspicious. In the summer of 1973 there was an outbreak of cholera in the city. Sales of fish were suspended and thousands of self-employed workers around the industry were thrown into unemployment. Social tension rose throughout the following year and in 1974 the first organised committees of the unemployed began to appear.

At first, they were small and often short-lived, based on a small neighbourhood. Their immediate problem was to root themselves among the unemployed as organisations that could fight for their own interests. It demanded continuous day-to-day activity and highly imaginative tactics. One of the favourites was to block both the railroads and the motorways. By the end of 1975, 'occupations' of up to 500 people would take over stations or railway tracks in order to put across their demands. Of course, such tactics required the most detailed planning—without it, it was a lethal activity.

The movement really took off when a pensioner was killed by a police jeep on one of the innumerable street demonstrations of a group of unemployed. It made national headlines and highlighted not only unemployment but also the unemployed as a movement. The local committees which had painstakingly built themselves up from a few dozen militants to a couple of hundred found themselves swamped with new members.

Tactics of success

At its height, the movement had some 15,000 members organised in 20 territorial committees in Naples and with a city-wide leadership made up of a delegate from each committee. Its demonstrations attracted up to 10,000 marchers. But its success had been laid down by a year's hard work: contacting both employed and unemployed, starting off with small demonstrations and 'stunts' and only afterwards breaking through onto a mass level.

The obvious demand of the unemployed was for jobs, but jobs which were both secure, paid at union rates and socially useful. This demand meant that they could link up with apprentices and trade unionists rather than appear in opposition to them. To the government's statement that there were no useful jobs to do given the inflated nature of the state bureaucracy and the low profitability in the area, the unemployed organised themselves to show there were jobs. They invaded hospitals, and cleaned up a ward and then photographed the resulting piles of dirt.

Such tactics were so successful that the government was forced to meet their representatives and promise 10,000 new jobs in the space of six months. Those jobs, the unemployed demanded, were to be allocated by the committees themselves in order to counter any possibility of corruption. Only those who fought for a job were to be given work, the committees decided.

The crucial problem that faced the unemployed was their relationship with the unions. Some, who had never had a job argued that the unions had never taken up their fight and were therefore to be rejected. But it was essential that the linkup was made if the unemployed were to break out of their isolation. The organised unemployed fought and won union membership and rights, as a special section of the unions. In this way they avoided being split along craft lines and remained united as unemployed workers. Through this link with the unions they won the right to participate in the meetings of the facatory councils—the shop stewards committees. They were to play a very important role in certain struggles—notably the picketing of work-places where the bosses wanted to impose overtime on the workers.

Self-organisation

The unemployed movement still continues today. In January this year, 6000 unemployed from Naples marched in Rome. But it is now far weaker than it was.

The essential reason for this has been the decline, not so much in the level, but in the self-confidence of the employed workers' struggles over the last five years. There has been a turn to much more sectional struggles, and as a result the unemployed movement has become increasingly isolated from the rest of the working class.

The experience from Italy shows the possibility of self-organisation among the unemployed but also highlights its dependence, in the long run, upon the employed workers' movement. At the same time, the existence of a strong and militant unemployed movement can be a major ally in the working class struggle within the factories.

Debate: are import controls the answer?

One of the events which aroused most interest at this year's Socialist Workers Party rally at Skegness was a debate on import controls as the answer to unemployment. The main speakers were John Deason of the Right to Work Campaign and Mike Griffin, lodge secretary of Penrhiwceiber pit in South Wales. Here we print edited versions of their introductory statements. We would like to hear the comments of readers of different political viewpoints on them.

John Deason

Five or six years ago, before the crisis was as deep as it is at present, if you asked, most people in the SWP thought of import controls, as some sort of debate we had with members of the Communist Party which wasn't really that central. Now the clamour for import controls is no longer just a debate within some sections of the left, but is much broader, is seen as some sort of solution, or part of some sort of solution, to the crisis. It isn't just the Benn wing of the Labour Party, or the Communist Party, or the TUC's Economic strategy. Their other bedfellows are now the CBI and whole sections of the Tory Party. Margaret Thatcher herself is involved in arranging import controls of textiles, and it is also one of the platforms that Reagan fought the last election on in America. So it isn't just a debate in the left.

But precisely because there is this rightist demand for import controls, there is a tendency by a number of socialists to just slag off other socialists, like Mike, and say that they are somehow in that camp. That isn't the case at all, and I want to deal specifically with the argument with people who are much closer to us but who still feel that import controls provide some sort of answer.

Our opposition to raising the demand for import contorls is based on two main things. First, the most obvious one, and the one that we are most motivated by, is that the very talk of a national solution immediately raises all sorts of national chauvinism. Even the way that selectivity of import controls is talked about has almost a racist tinge to it. In the car industry, the demand all the time is for control on Japanese imports, and the language used often verges on the 'threat of the Yellow Peril'. In fact, it's completely farcical. The production of motor cars is now an

international process. Who can say whether a Ford car in Dagenham is a British car or German or Belgian?

Now such chauvinism is a danger, and I'm not exaggerating it. An example is a leaflet that was given out in South Wales on the question of pit closures by the Communist Party. The concluding slogans on the leaflet are 'No more cuts and closures' and 'We'll stop the Tory wreckers before they destroy our country'. That really is the danger that we're very sensitive to – this talk of 'our country'. It's an abdication, in our opinion, of any form of internationalism.

The second point is that the very raising of the demand for import controls diverts workers away from the need to take action. It is calling for another agency to defend your jobs, for some action in parliament, for some pressure on parliament, for the TUC to negotiate. If you take the example of the T&GWU, which has been one of the most active unions involved in campaigning for import controls the whole strategy is for joint union/management approaches to government. Again, we've had the spectacle of Duffy and Edwards in Leyland going hand in hand demanding import controls.

Logic

The very logic of the demand for import controls is not to take any action, but to build up a lobby with the management. And that's the basis for our opposition to it. But let's look a bit further to see, even if we did have import controls, would they work in any case?

As a matter of fact we don't even have to guess what would be the result. There are import controls in operation at the moment. The key example is, of course, in the textile industry where there are extensive controls. The textile industry has perhaps been hit harder by redundancies than any other industry, and those import controls have really not had any effect in preventing those redundancies.

But even worse, it is an example of all the things that we say are wrong about import controls. Once you slap import controls on someone, they retaliate, and here the key example is Indonesia where Britain slapped on import controls, £10m worth, and the Indonesian government retaliated by cancelling £150m worth of British exports which included a British Steel constructed bridge, 60 Leyland buses and a Hawker Siddely private plane. In other words, far from saving jobs, it hit jobs in other areas.

The case of textiles shows something else as well. As a direct result of import controls being put on the price of jeans went on up average £2 within a month. Import controls mean that you stop cheaper products coming into the country, therefore the prices escalate and puts up inflation. To take the case

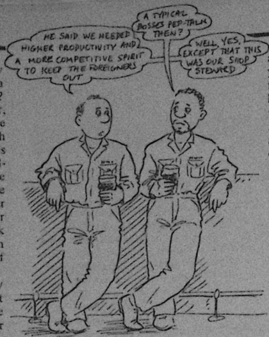


Illustration: Sophie

of Lee Jeans, we have to ask why it is the company want to close down that factory. The reason is that there's a fall in demand, people can't afford to buy so many jeans. So they start shutting up shop. And the situation that the girls are so correctly fighting now is a direct result of import controls. Or take the example of shoes. It always makes me laugh when I hear people say that we're being flooded out with cheap Eastern Europen shoes. "If only people would buy British shoes!" If you're on the dole or a poorly paid worker, you don't have any choice between British shoes for £18 and East. European shoes for £9; the only choice is between the Eastern European shoes or no shoes.

When we look at where import controls are applied, even if it could be argued they have some immediate palliative effect in one industry, one sector or one area, the overall effect is very dangerous indeed.

Peripheral

The other thing you have to ask is, is it true that cheap imports are really the cause of unemployment? And again I can quote a government survey of 24 industries in Britain most affected by imports. The companies were asked what were the reasons for the redundancies they were instituting. Out of 100, 11 of them replied that the reason for redundancies were imports from the 3rd World, 22 replied that it was because of imports from other industrialised countries. But much more revealing was that 5 said it was because of losses inside the UK home market, 12 through decline in demand, and 50, 50%, through rationalisation. That, as anyone up against redundancy knows, is the main driving force – the fight for higher profits, higher productivity, rationalisation. And the issue of imports is largely peripheral.

Look to a specific example in South Wales of the fall in demand for coal from the BSC. You can either say that it's due to the cheap imports, or you can look to what the real figures are all about. From 1979 to 1980, in a year and a half, coal imports rose from 2.3m tons to 8m tons. Now that has some effect, but the major reason was the falling demand from the British Steel Corporation who were sacking steelworkers, closing steel mills: the overall usage of coal by the BSC fell in that period from 21m tons to 15m tons.

We have to recognise that even if import controls could work, it's not true that cheap imports are the *main* cause of unemployment.

The biggest stumbling block about the whole argument for import controls is the notion that you can dabble within the system as it is and get some immediate and radical change – the argument that Benn and people like Benn are are most associated with. What destroys the case are the multinational corporations. They are now so powerful that if import controls were slapped on it, would be just another thing they could use and manipulate when deciding which countries to invest in. And I'm not exaggerating.

Tinkering

It is now calculated that a third of all world trade is internal to the multinationals, and it's just dreaming to think that tinkering around with legislation will have any effect on their power.

We have to recognise the driving force behind the world crisis – falling profit rates. If you can make more money out of speculation than out of producing steel, running power stations, making motor cars, that's the way you do it. Unless you recognise that, you fall into the trap of looking for short-term piecemeal solutions. And I would argue that that's all import controls represent.

We argue, and I know Mike would agree, the key way of resisting redundancies is the activity of workers themselves. The miners were a classic example of it. The fight of the miners has always been with the government over the question of state subsidies, even back before 1926. I think we can all agree the key thing is the need for strikes, factory occupations, activity.

I think that where Mike gets drawn into the arguments for import controls is over tactics. In struggle it is completely legitimate to use any tactic whatsoever to disrupt the productive process to force concessons out of either the employer of the state. And I would make a very sharp distinction between, say, if Linwood had gone into occupation and had sent pickets round the docks to stop the movement of Peugeot cars, and the situation where people demand controls from the Tory Government in collusion wih Giscard d'Estaing in France. That's to believe that Japanese workers interests are really with their Japanese bosses, Linwood workers with their French bosses.

Mike Griffin

The question of the debate is whether import controls should be supported. And the answer I'm giving, straightaway, is that it's to be looked at in terms of working class experience. And the only way to judge a particular case of import contols is the experience of the workers in that particular trade and to act accordingly. The answer that I'm giving is that you can support import controls in relation to the work experience of the workers in that industry.

In 1979, in the area where I live, the Cynon valley of South Wales, they were closing a pit called Deep Duffryn, and we decided to set up a Campaign to oppose that closure. A lot of tactics were used in that campaign from public meetings to petitions, to lobbies, to pickets, to strikes against the closure of a particular colliery.

Now, in the course of that campaign we went into a bit of research. They've got what's called an Intelligence Unit in the local county council, a Labour Council, and we thought we'd use that and let them get out some figures on what coal had been imported into South Wales in the previous year. We were amazed when we came out with the figures that there was a million tons of coal had been imported into South Wales in the previous year, and the countries of origin were various – South Africa was one, and to think that coal from South Africa was being imported into South Wales was really too much.

Doctrinaire

At the same time that this million tons of coal was being imported, we had on the floor in the Cynon valley a million tons of coal, brought over from Taff Merthyr and other collieries in the local valleys. So, we went to conferences, we passed resolutions calling for a stop to the import of coal, and we went picketing.

The question of import controls is rather in the air, theoretical, doctrinaire, in fact. If you touch anything to do with internationalism, in particular with the Socialist Workers Party, immediately there's a reaction. Instead of the issue being judged on its merits, there's an immediate prejudice against the situation.

Now we went picketing down the docks in December '79. We picketed the docks for six weeks, down there at 5 o'clock on the side talking to the dockers and explaining the difficulties of the miners in their local communities on the basis that the coal had been put on the floor, there were no markets for the coal, and here was coal coming over the sea. As a result of it, the dockers and the tug-boat men agreed with us, and as long as we maintained a picket line there, they would neither bring a ship into the dock side, or if there was any on the dock side the dockers wouldn't unload it.

To me that's working class solidarity and what I mean by working class experience.

I've looked into a lot of pamphlets and books, written by Duncan Hallas. They were proceeding from a theory and then trying to relate that to an actual circumstance. That's not on. As far as the situation in South Wales goes, from that particular campaign, from that picketing of the docks, it led us to a lot of discussion with steelworkers, dockers, railwaymen, and ourselves, the miners, and in addition to the resolutions being passed, we were trying to analyse such crazy situations as coal being brought 12,000 miles across the sea and allegedly being cheaper to put into Port Talbot steelworks than coal produced ten miles up the road.

Non-unionists

In fact, our boys were in the United States in 1979. I've got a little booklet here, *South Wales Miners in America, Report of the first Rank and File British Miners Delegation visit to the United States Coalfields, May 1979*. The Maeroy Lodge went out there, rank and file, and met the miners. What they found was that the major problem in the United States was imports. While we were having American coal exported to us, they were having the problem of Polish coal, in one instance, being sent to Germany, within the Common Market, having a subsidy attached to it, being sent out on a ship to America, being unloaded for coking purposes in America, and the same boat going to another dock and picking up 18,000 tons of coal to bring to Newport. The whole crazy situation became exposed in these discussions.

One point I want to bring up again is that it's privately owned, the US coalfields, and half of the miners are not in a trade union. Now we talk about international solidarity. International solidarity with whom? Non-unionists? Shall we all be scabs together? And blacklegs? Is this what we mean by international solidarity? It's not what I mean by solidarity. I don't accept solidarity with non-unionists whatever they are, whether they're in Taiwan, America or South Wales. The issue of a union has got to be fought, it's no good pretending we've got these links of solidarity.

What I'm saying is that if we hadn't stopped the importation of coal in that particular period, our miners would be out of work. And the same issue is there at the present moment. The campaign over Deep Deffryn, and the discussions we had with other workers led to the strike we had in February this year. We went for it, we came out first, and went all over the country, to Yorkshire and different places that were a bit behind coming out with us, and this was appreciated by the movement.

One of the things we were striking against was imported coal. We've got the situation in Port Talbot at the present moment where the contract for 300,000 tons of United States coal has come to an end, and there's 300,000 tons from the Welsh pits going in there, and it's going to be subsidised by the government as part of the demand that we made.

I am not concerned about the theory. I am concerned that we won't have one man or woman as an addition to the unemployment figures for the sake of a theory, because the indignity to that family is tremendous. And that's the reality of it. I'm not interested in the general theory whatsoever. It's the working class experience that must be judged in every instance, and if the instance says that by demanding control on imports to save a job, well, save that job, we'll come to the other question later.

If anybody's going to tip over this society, it's going to be the miners. Have no illusions about that, because when the time for the barricades does come, the first ones to the barricades will be the miners. And the theory will again be forgotten in the direct action. Direct action is what we believe in. I'm unhappy with the inferences that are thrown out all the time when you try to argue a detailed case of job saving as we have done – and we have saved jobs, there would be thousands of miners on the dole at the present time in South Wales, if we hadn't conducted that strike in February. One of the basic elements in that strike was to stop the importation of coal. And if it's good enough for the miners . . . I get the idea coming over that there's a special case for the miners, but if it's good enough for the miners, it's good enough to be examined in a work experience situation in other industries.

Tactic

We are not recommending import controls as the answer to society's problems. No way, neither are we advocating nationalisation as the to society's problems – we know from experience that nationalisation has been a hollow sham in many respects, a milk cow for private industry. But because we know that nationalisation hasn't been a success, it doesn't mean we won't advocate nationalisation. Because we will advocate it: it is necessary to change its style, and content. And it's the same with import controls – it's a tactic, and it depends on the circumstances. There's no general answer. It is fundamental really in my discussions with members of the Socialist Workers Party, whom I admire very much. I feel that in this trend of argument about import controls, there lies a thread of disagreement which I have when we discuss problems, and the thread is that there appears a desire for the generality to overcome the specific, that the theory, doctrine is what matters and the circumstance of the particular occurrence is completely different.

Shirley, Shirley, quite contrary how will your garden grow?

The 'old politics' are dead, according to Shirley Williams. Meanwhile the new Social Democratic Party have attracted 40,000 members in less than six weeks. Paul Foot explores their politics and their appeal.

No matter how often we blink our eyes in disbelief, the ridiculous reality is still there. A gang of four former Labour cabinet ministers, each one of them with deeply reactionary records both in government and outside, have broken from the Labour Party to present themselves as 'a new force' in British politics.

Without spelling out a single policy, they have attracted 40,000 dues-paying members, a seventh of the total Labour Party membership. The public opinion polls put this party without a policy *ahead of all others* and come to the preposterous conclusion that if there were a general election tomorrow the new 'social democratic party' would be able to form a government!

The mass appeal of this new party is not, I think, a mirage. It is here with us to stay for some time yet. This has nothing to do with the SDP's policies, for it has none. As Dr David Owen blurted out to a questioner on the day of the SDP's birth: 'Look, love, if you want a manifesto, go and join one of the other parties'.

No. The appeal is based, first, and most solidly, on *freshness*. The 'old politics', Shirley Williams ceaselessly tells us in her book, *Politics is for People*, are dead. By 'old politics' she means in particular the politics of Labour.

In this, she is on strong ground. Three bouts of post-war Labour governments, two of them with huge majorities, (and two of them with Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins as senior ministers) are remembered without a trace of nostalgia. Who wants to go back to Wilson or Callaghan? They were backward, stale administrations whose few achievements in the field of social reform in the first blush of office were largely rubbed out by the slide into conformity.

Yet there is another side to the new party's appeal which appears to contradict this freshness. It is that the new party appears 'safe'. It will not do anything drastic or revolutionary. It will not upset the balance of the 'market' or 'the mixed economy', about both of which Shirley Williams writes almost lyrically.

'The market' she tells us (p46) 'matches demand and supply better than the planners do. It responds more easily to changing fashions and needs. It is rather good at getting rid of unsuccessful enterprises..'

There will be no nationalising or intervening from her, we can be sure!

The limits for all Shirley Williams' 'new, radical policies' are set by the forecasts of economists and the ebb and flow of booms and the slumps. In Chapter 4, How the World Has Changed, she abandons any responsibility for changing the rules which have brought about the recession. The 'low or negative growth rate' is there. It is inevitable. Anything that Shirley Williams can do must be within those boundaries.

She toys for a moment with the possibility that the priorities of modern capitalism could be altered by tough economic controls. 'The only initiative that could radically alter the world's economic prospects' she tells us (p65), 'would be the recycling of the oil exporters' surpluses as well as some of the currency reserves of the industrial countries, in effect the Brandt Commission's proposals in their most radical form'.

Yes, in its most radical moments, the Brandt Commission, which included such well-known revolutionary figures as Edward Heath, former Tory prime minister, and Willy Brandt, former German chancellor, argued that the only way to deal with the huge surpluses (OK word for profits) of the oil companies and the sheikdoms had amassed from the rise in oil prices was to 'recycle' (OK word for 'direct or 'force') them to where they are really needed, to the starving millions for example.

What does Mrs Williams think of this policy?

'Simply to state such proposals' she goes on, 'is to emphasise how improbable their adoption is, despite growing public understanding and support'.

It would be *nice*, wouldn't it, if we could get control of the economic resources and plan them so that the needy benefit and the rjch were squeezed a little?

But that is 'improbable' because it means mucking about with the market, and the profits which are its main-spring. So we have to accept a shrinking capitalism, the end of economic growth, huge oil profits, starving millions—we have to accept all these things and find political solutions in spite of them. From Chapter 4 onwards, these matters are referred to constantly as '*external circumstances* outlined in Chapter 4' (p171) or '*the changes* described in Chapter 4' (p178).

What follows in terms of practical 'radical' politics, not surprisingly, is thin, if not pathetic. The only coherent philosophy is: 'small is beautiful'.

Shirley Williams argues that industry and trade unions have become obsessed by size, and that smaller units and smaller businesses might prove more successful. She has discovered that there have been more jobs created in America in small business than in large business, and concludes that it's the job of a new radical government to give more help and encouragement to small businesses. The type of help and encouragement she advocates is rather similar to the proposals in Sir Geoffrey Howe's last ('radical'? 'reforming'? 'new'?) budget, which scooped Mrs Williams' book by a few weeks.

Sometimes, the proposals she advocates for smaller units are plain reactionary. For instance, she advocates greater use of labour rather than machines, *in itself*, quite regardless of the type of work which is to be done.

She completely forsakes the traditional socialist attitude that, for the vast majority of work, which is dreary, soul-destroying work, machines which do the job are in themselves a blessing and are only a curse when they are used for profit to create unemployment and poverty. Control of the machines by people, instead of the other way round as demanded by capitalism, could result in a better life for everyone. Instead, Shirley Williams seriously proposes scrapping machines in favour of masses of people. And because she has also found out that smaller businesses use more labour per machine than do large businesses (usually because small businesses are less efficient, by the way, not more so) she concludes (again) that small are better than big.

Illustration Gill Brownbill

This is the *main philosophical conclusion* of her book. And of course it is quite fatuous. It is not the size of the enterprise which determines whether or not it is efficient or even quite pleasant to work for. It is its ownership, its dynamic, its organisation, its purpose. About all these things Shirley Williams has nothing to say, save to echo the conventional Liberal Party call for 'more participation' and 'more democracy'.

She lumps industry and finance, where no one in control is ever elected, together with the trade unions, whose control is based on election and choice, however slack and infrequent the elections are. She is for workers and management sharing in the control of their firms, and she seems to favour the basic proposals of the Bullock Report for power-sharing. Yet to the question: how to get even that degree of power-sharing in the teeth of the most hysterical and bitter opposition from the unelected and irresponsible employers? —she has no reply whatever. 'Governments, corporate powers of industry and trade unions' she argues simply '*should devolve some of their power downwards.' (my italics).*

No doubt they *should*. But *what if they don't?* No reply. Once again, any question which might lead to confrontation is quickly side-stepped.

The obsession with 'safety' dogs all Shirley Williams' book, which is, by the way, a series of essays. Most of the essays were written at different times either for American university students or for the shadowy Policy Studies Institute which stepped in fast to sponsor Shirley Williams when she lost her seat in the 1979 general election.

Her specific proposals are intended to span the gap between what Dr Owen has called the 'caring tradition' of the Labour Party, and the 'market tradition' of the Conservative Party. The 'caring' side includes a commitment to a wealth tax (which is more than Shirley Williams and the last Labour government could manage in five years); some very useful ideas about employing masses of people to improve older housing; and even a clear statement against all fee-paying education (which prospered so hugely during the last Labour government and Shirley Williams' three years as education minister).

To balance the 'caring', there is the usual call to sacrifice. She warns:

> 'The industrial countries have been *wildly profligate* in the booming post-war decades. Their governments and their peoples have enjoyed *a material spree* never paralleled before. Now, as the late Anthony Crosland said to Britain's local authorities in 1977, [well, actually, he was dead in 1977, but Shirley Williams is as untidy with her facts as she is with her philosophy] the party is over.'

There we have it. Shirley Williams and her new party represent radicalism and newness on the one hand, safety and caution on the other; the 'caring' of the Labour Party and the spirit of sacrifice usually associated with the Tories.

The appeal is to all decent people who are fed up with the stick-in-the-mud approach of former Labour governments, who dislike the Thatcher Government's meanness and class loyalty, but who are also nervous of anything drastic or immediate by way of reform. This, in the period of industrial quiescence in which we now live, is a very powerful appeal indeed.

It is easy enough to scoff at the Gang of Four themselves, their own political heritage, their middle class origins, their careerism and their cant. But the appeal remains, and will not be shifted by ridicule.

What can shift it is the argument which mounts up relentlessly against the likelihood of the SDP delivering even the most minor reforms. It is not just that their radicalism conflicts with their safeness; nor that their caring conflicts with their dedication to market forces. It is that such is the nature of the society we live in that when the two sets of opposites conflict, the former always loses; the latter always win.

Shirley Williams knows all about the inherent inequalities in our society. She cites the figures, and she wants them changed. There is at least one reference in her book to the need for equality.

But the figures of inequality describe more than something which is just 'wrong'. They describe a power structure, in which a class of people control society's wealth and therefore control society's political power.

We *know* this happens. We have all those Labour governments and all the efforts of Shirley Williams and her colleagues to prove it. They became ministers of the Crown.

They cared about private education, but they did not move to end it. They cared about unemployment, but they presided over the doubling of it.

Roy Jenkins cared about racialism, but he was in government when it increased beyond anything he could ever have expected. William Rogers was not in favour of juggernaut lorries, but while Minister of Transport he fought desperately to remove the few controls on them. The power of the people with property lays down the law about what happens to all of us. And parliamentary democracy is too slender a connection with the masses seriously to disturb that power.

When caring people get to government in the way Shirley Williams intends to do, they find their caring conflicts with the economic reality and their caring is always shelved. A government headed by the Gang of Four would no doubt include most of the ideas in this book in its manifesto. But because there is not the slightest sign of how they are to be carried out, not the slightest moment of doubt about the capacity of parliamentary government to turn back the tide of corporate power, we will not even get Mrs Williams' wealth tax, her abolition of fee-paying schools, her full employment or her increased social services. We will not get her house improvements or her small power stations. But we *will* get her bombs, her incomes policy, her stronger Common Market, her increasingly hysterical calls for sacrifice. In other words, all her freshness, and radicalism will take us straight back to the fudged state capitalism of the last Callaghan government: exactly in the opposite direction, that is, to the one where Shirley Williams is now pointing.

There *is* an alternative; there *is* a new way of looking at politics. Shirley Williams knows it, and quite deliberately and shamefully refuses even to argue with it. After disposing quite easily with Russia and Russian-style Communists, she devotes a single sentence to 'revolutionary romantics and Trotskyites' who are

> 'Wedded to an idea of politics which has never been attained anywhere but which in theory might one day be achieved if only revolution could in some way be harnessed to the perfectibility of human beings'.

Human nature will not have revolution! It will only put up with the continued stumbling of 'caring' politicians who serve the interests of property! 'Human nature' offers us the only hope for political advance, a mixture of half-hearted contradictions of the type voiced by Shirley Williams. Human nature demands sacrifice instead of growth; poverty instead of plenty. Human nature presents a social democratic party, peddling the failed dogmas of the Callaghan government as a 'new radical alternative'.

Shirley Williams makes much of a quotation from Immanuel Kant: 'Out of the crooked timber of humanity, no straight thing can ever be made'.

She should make that the central slogan of her dynamic and radical appeal at the next general election.

Putting down new roots?

The 1980 Labour Party conference passed a resolution in favour of the establishment of workplace branches. Labour Party members in the Timex factories in Dundee have gone ahead and set up the first of these branches in the country. The Timex Labour Party branch claims between 80 and 100 members and meets every month with an average attendance of about 30 – about half the members are women.

Alan Barclay and Jim Barlow from Dundee SWP interviewed the education committee of the branch.

What is the background to the formation of your branch?
The setting up of industrial organisation in the workplace by the Labour Party is a reflection of the leftward move in the Labour Party nationally. It is also a reflection of the deepening crisis of capitalism. In the past, workplace organisation has been solely the prerogative of the trade unions or parties further to the left than the Labour Party, but more and more, because of the deepening crisis working people are beginning to see they need something more than trade union organisation, not to defend the gains they have won in the past, but also to go forward. That means a political organisation.

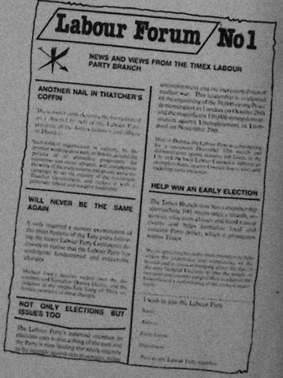
It was only with the shift to the left in the Labour Party that the Labour Party itself saw the need to move away from being purely an electoral machine based in the wards, coming out at election times, but beginning to campaign on the issues which meant backing up the ward organisation by organising in the workplace.

Do you see your branch operating as part of an overall electoral strategy or discussing industrial issues in the factory?
It is obviously going to back up the fight of the Labour Party in the electoral field, in the local elections, or in we hope, a general election, quite soon. We also see the achievement of socialism in Britain not only purely through the parliamentary road, the achievement of socialism will come through a dual struggle, both inside parliament and outside – the demonstrations, petitions, deputations, the lobbying, the involving of working people actively in the winning of socialism.

This is one of the roles of the industrial branch – to go to the factory floor, to agitate on the issues and mobilise the people of the factory floor in support of the issues being pursued at any given point. This represents a new feature of Labour Party activity. In the past the party put more emphasis on getting people to the polling station rather than getting them to understand the policies the party was putting forward.

Why did your bulletin not deal with factory issues?
The first bulletin covered major issues like the arms race and the peace question, which is very important. But we cannot ignore the importance of the trade union movement in the factory as well. They have got the organisation and the members and they have to represent these members. When it comes to things that are specific to the issues that the trade union movement is campaigning on, we can put that extra political weight behind what the trade union movement is saying – as long as we get their go ahead to do so. But what we don't intend to do is campaign against any issue the trade union movement in the factory is putting forward.

Would you print an article about a wage claim in the factory or sackings?
The trade union movement has access to workers in a way that an industrial Labour Party branch doesn't. Trade unions can call meetings of workers and address the workers directly on the issues. While there may be a cross-fertilisation, the trade unions are concerned with wages and conditions in the factory, full-stop. The Labour Party industrial branch is to bring political organisation to the point of production, and at the same time to popularize the policies of the Labour Party. It is not the job of the political organisations to get involved in industrial relations matters, the trade unions have the procedures to deal with these.


Labour Forum No 1

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE TIMEX LABOUR PARTY BRANCH

ANOTHER NAIL IN THATCHER'S COFFIN

WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN

NOT ONLY ELECTIONS BUT ISSUES TOO

HELP WIN AN EARLY ELECTION

Could a conflict develop between a party member and a trade union official, also a party member?
No doubt there are gulfs between individual members and officials. If it happened it would be a trade union issue and not discussed at the Labour Party branch. As far as wage claims are concerned it is the prerogative of the 'on plant' union.

What impact do you see the industrial branch having?
There has already been one measureable benefit for the Labour Party in Dundee – the increases in delegates to the General Management Committee from Timex as a direct result of the formation of the industrial branch. Another important thing is that the members of the Labour Party who will represent the Labour Party as councillors and things like that are answerable on the shop-floor.

The more of that type of representation we can get, the stronger will be democracy inside the labour movement. It is one thing to vote for a rents increase and retire to a pub you own, it is another thing to vote for a rents increase and retire to the Press Shop on the night-shift in the Timex. There has been a massive gulf since the war between the Labour Party and the grass roots, and what the industrial branch will attempt to do will be to bring that gulf closer and become a more realistic voice of the Labour Party.

The right wing will oppose the formation of industrial branches, but because of the advantages politically to the Labour Party in the long term, they will have to give us good, sound constitutional rights. One of the things that amazed me about the branch – and I've been in the Timex for nine years during which time there have always been groups of socialists active on issues – is the unifying of these groups. All the socialists active in the factory over time are now active in the Labour Party branch. It is a unifying of all those committed to introducing socialism. Another good thing, the Timex Labour Party branch covers all the plants and all the sectors of the workers employed by Timex, that is a new dimension and this is one of the reasons why management are so apprehensive about the branch.

Tapping an audience but not giving a lead

There isn't in real life a real difference between political and economic expectations, and it is wrong to separate them at work in the way the Labour Party branch at Timex appear to do.

The differences between the militants and the rank and file is how they actually see the world: for the rank and file the most important thing is having money—to put it simply—and the most important thing for the militants is having sound solid organisation. A permanent political organisation can only be based on the fact that you've got quite a large acceptance among ordinary rank and file. And all our experience is that you can't build that without a really long hard slog.

The thing that strikes me about the idea of Labour Party factory organisation as discussed here is that factory organisation is seen very much as tapping an audience rather than giving a lead. But you have to go out and do things which win the respect and attention of fellow workers.

Socialists are almost always a minority among the workforce at first, even if we are often tempted to hide the fact by passing grandiose resolutions at union meetings. We have to work over small issues to build up the support of our fellow workers, involving them in action and showing them that *they* have the power and the ability to change society.

In this there can be no separation of industrial struggle and political organisation. Every initiative we make in improving shop floor organisation also improves our chances of getting our socialist arguments across. This means if is a mistake to believe that 'trade union matters' can be hived off by the political organisation in the factory to a separate trade union body. Instead, socialists have to be prepared, when necessary, to offer fraternal criticism of the conduct of the trade union struggle by bodies that include people who are not yet committed socialists.

It is very dangerous to behave in any other way. A lot of workers can all too easily think you are being devious, by hiding the fact that you're politics does influence your trade union work.

That is why we in the SWP operate openly as a political organisation in the factory, using workplace bulletins to put across our political views on trade union questions as well as on 'purely political issues'. But, of course, we welcome the opportunity to co-operate with Labour Party factory branches as and when they are founded.

Roger Cox

Hard NUT to crack

The NUT Conference is not the most reliable indicator of attitudes among the general membership of the Union. The less militant rural areas are grossly over-represented—a Local Association of 7 members is entitled to 2 delegates while the Inner London Associations of 1500 are entitled to 6. Despite an elaborate procedure for voting on the order of the agenda, statements from the Executive (memoranda) take precedence in debate. A new procedural device this year ensured that amendments challenging the whole basis of Executive memoranda were shunted to the end of the Queue. No such restraint is imposed upon the Executive, whose response to most of the motions submitted was to delete them entirely, replacing them with bland statements of their own. With such a carefully rigged structure, the Left is unlikely to make any significant gains, but despite it the Executive was defeated on several occasions this year, confirming the general political drift to the left.

The most humiliating defeat for the leadership was over the suspension of the six Officers of the Lambeth Association who had refused to withdraw a motion passed by a General Meeting backing the Lambeth Council workers' strike on 4th February. The Executive tabled a motion congratulating themselves on "protecting the membership" against those who showed contempt for the Union's rules and acted outside its aims and objectives. Lambeth was not mentioned by name so that even if the motion were defeated the "Lambeth 6" would remain suspended! Delegates saw through this trick and refused to allow the motion to be discussed—though this was achieved only by forcing a card vote. A motion for the reinstatement of the "Lambeth 6" was ruled out of order on the grounds that the decision of the NUT Disciplinary Appeals Committee (the Executive!) was final.

The other major defeat for the Executive was over nuclear disarmament. They unsuccessfully sought to replace a motion expressing opposition to the nuclear arms race by a statement about "education for peace". The successful motion failed to take up the issues of CND, NATO, and Cruise missiles—and was "multi-lateralist" in character. But it will enable NUT members to campaign officially around an issue which the Executive has argued is outside the aims and objects of the Union.

The third victory for the Left was over the procedures for initiating official action. There is a requirement that two-thirds of all

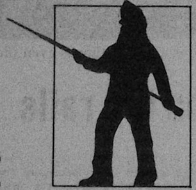
eligible to vote must express support in a secret ballot. Even then members are only asked to take action and no disciplinary proceedings are taken against those who refuse to do so. Discontent over the Executive's failure to lead a campaign for the reinstatement of Nottingham nursery teacher, Eileen Crosbie, who was sacked for refusing to teach a class of 40 children with only one assistant, resulted in a demand for members to be instructed to take action in future. Despite vigorous Executive opposition, this was carried after a card vote.

Taken together, these three setbacks for the leadership represent a sizeable dent in their strategy. The Lambeth suspensions were not designed principally to rid the Executive of embarrassing critics, but to deter those who were becoming increasingly willing to initiate action on their own account. The Executive's response to threats of teacher redundancy has been to assist the employers by negotiating jobs away through premature retirement, non-replacement of teachers who leave and the use of short-term contracts. Above all they want to avoid any confrontation with the Tories—hence the need for strong centralised control over action, which they will now find more difficult to maintain. The Executive's other worry is the increasing volume of Local Association discussion on issues outside the narrow educational sphere—abortion, gay rights, nuclear disarmament and Ireland. Their standard response until now has been to quote the opinion of their resident Lord Denning, the Union Solicitor, that such matters are outside the objects of the Union. This will be much more difficult to argue following the Conference decision on nuclear arms.

The overall effect of the Conference has been to provide the Left with a much wider audience to address, particularly on the question of internal democracy. But it must be admitted that the interest in more overtly political issues arises partly from the difficulty in resisting school closures, increased class sizes and compulsory transfers. A school-based fight around these issues, in conjunction with other groups of workers, must be built if the gains are not to prove illusory.

Dick North.

Defeating a steel union witch-hunt



Regrettably the current victimisations of teacher militants by the NUT are not isolated examples. Some leading Iron and Steel Trades Confederation officials also prefer to turn on the activists inside the union rather than fight the policies of Ian MacGregor and his Tory paymasters.

Since the defeat of the steelworkers' national wages strike, there have been a staggering 77,000 job losses in the British Steel corporation. Another large wave of redundancies is inevitable when Macgregor reviews progress in July.

The militancy and shop-floor organisation required to fight back frightens our union leaders. During the strike, the explosion of rank and file activity in South Yorkshire posed a threat to Bill Sirs and other right-wing officials.

Muck-raking

Take the example of Stocksbridge, where the joint union committee was particularly effective in organising flying pickets and raising funds, from all over the country, and as far afield as Germany, Sweden and Ireland. Unfounded rumours were spread about misuse of strike funds, and the ISTC executive set up an inquiry. Incidentally, the muck-raking was especially strong from the Communist Party dominated district committee of the AUEW who wished to hinder the setting up of a permanent joint union stewards committee (ISTC, AUEW, EETPU, T&GWU, etc) since they saw in it too much SWP influence.

The Inquiry was really just a cover to attack the militants, since the Stocksbridge funds had been professionally audited.

In contrast, the Scunthorpe strike committee was dominated by right-wing officials. No action was taken by the ISTC executive against full-time official Ted Hardaker, after a claim in the *Financial Weekly* that he could not account for £60,000 out of the £100,000 ISTC allocated strike funds.

Hardaker was said to have operated a 'slush fund' which included the payment of bribes to lorry drivers. Deals were done with the police, which kept pickets small and demoralised. When the more effective Stocksbridge pickets were sent in to help by the South Yorkshire divisional strike committee, Ted Hardaker threatened that if any damage was done to any lorries, then he would obtain half-a-dozen heavies with pickaxe handles to sort them out.

Friction developed between Hardaker and the Scunthorpe *Real Steel News*. During the strike, in front of witnesses, Hardaker threatened one of its supporters, Peter Johnson, a mould bay worker at the Anchor steel plant in Scunthorpe, with physical violence. He vowed that Peter would lose his ISTC card (Peter's branch is a 100% closed shop), and would never work in Scunthorpe again.

One year later, Hardaker personally complained about the *Real Steel News* to the ISTC executive, and demanded Peter's immediate expulsion from the union!

The January issue of Scunthorpe *Real Steel News* had bitterly attacked two senior union officials, Jack Sturman and George Teale, for their willingness to sell jobs at Normandy Park works in Scunthorpe, a victim of the MacGregor axe.

The ISTC Executive set up an Inquiry into *Real Steel News* and Peter Johnson for allegedly writing the article in question. Under ISTC constitution, the Executive can expel any member if they feel he has brought the union into 'disrepute'.

McCarthyite

The Inquiry, with the union's president and vice-president, was held on March 25th, and Hardaker made all the arrangements. He collected 'evidence' in a McCarthyite fashion that led to complaints from four of the largest ISTC branches. He selected the witnesses, and he was to be the 'prosecutor' on the day. To cap it all, the union inquiry was arranged to be held on BSC management premises.

However, this crude attempt to single out Peter Johnson failed because the *Real Steel News* group in Scunthorpe did not rely on a fair hearing, but went to the rank and file for support. They decided offence was the best defence.

When the Inquiry team arrived, they were shocked to find 25 angry people already in occupation of the room. The lobby included steel-workers from Peter's branch, pickets who had been threatened by Hardaker, people who had witnessed Hardaker's threats to Peter Johnson, officials of the ISTC branches, as well as SWP and Labour Party activists. The message was simple: no kangaroo court would be tolerated.

It was made clear that *Real Steel News* would be defended collectively, and Peter should not be singled out. The size and determination of the lobby forced the Inquiry team to backpedal.

In the end, the Inquiry limited itself to the single question of whether Peter had written the *Real Steel News* article. A 'fair' procedure was adopted, and consequently no shred of evidence against Peter was produced—not surprising since he had not written the particular article.

Grovelling

By the end Hardaker was grovelling. He said *Real Steel News* had access to important information he could never get, and if only we would share it with him, he too could fight management.

The following Sunday, the ISTC Joint Committee erupted in anger over Hardaker's role in the Inquiry, and believed it should never have been called. Hardaker tried to hush the matter up by proposing that no statement should be issued to the press, but he was voted down by the 20 delegates present, and the row was featured on the front page of the local newspaper. Hardaker has isolated himself from tthe bulk of the lay officials throughout Scunthorpe and South Yorkshire.

The Inquiry is to report formally to the ISTC Executive on April 30th. With no 'evidence' against Peter Johnson, a decision to take disciplinary action is remote.

The successful defence of Peter Johnson has breathed new life into the Scunthorpe Socialist Workers Party.

Joe Herbertson

Smithfield NUR banner with an old message that is even more relevant today!

Quiet job loss on the rails

The continuing shake out in the public sector is taking various forms. From the dramatic closures in steel and the coal mines to the small, almost unnoticed (except by those directly involved) redundancies in British Rail.

In the railway industry in the past five years there have been thousands of 'voluntary' redundancies, almost all accepted by the main rail unions, many of them in fact encouraged by the wage bargaining style of NUR/ASLEF/TSSA.

The wage deals signed over the last three years have all contained promises of increased productivity, and none of the unions concerned have shown any qualms at the figure suggested by BR management of 30,000 jobs to be lost. Indeed this year at the start of the Conciliation Grade negotiations (drivers, porters, cleaners etc) the NUR were boasting of last year's 4,000 'voluntary' redundancies as a productivity gain.

Even more disturbing are the large number of vacancies (somewhere in the region of 20,000) which are unfilled. The BR board has been operating a virtual standstill on recruitment for almost a year and only key operating staff are being recruited. This of course is accepted by the rail unions and no attempts, by blacking of jobs etc, are made to fill these vacancies. Indeed there are indications from some regions that local managements are attempting to introduce Manpower Services Commission schemes to fill jobs such as cleaners, floor sweepers and so on. So far the NUR/TSSA have made no comment, and it has been left to the engineering confederation unions to put the block on it.

The main problem with the rail unions is an ideological one—they are rooted firmly in the early part of the century. For them the 'agreement' is sacred, the 'machinery of negotiation' is a vast Moloch consuming the energies of all. The officials of the main rail unions are effectively personnel managers, but with a job for life.

So when they commit themselves to agreements which guarantee reductions in manning, the officials at least are bound by all their training to implement them.

Contradiction

It is an interesting contradiction, however, that although the rail unions are prepared to allow their members, such as the parcels staff, to be phased out, let the board talk of axing one mile of rail line and they are all up in arms. The recent dispute over the proposed closure of the Woodhead-/Pennine freight line is an example. Here they supported moderately militant action by guards and drivers to keep the line open.

At the same time, action by cleaning staff at my own depot—Old Oak Common—who are refusing to work to tough new schedules which would ultimately mean staff reductions, is condemned by the local bureaucrat, Len Bounds, as 'unofficial and in breach of the agreement'. While NUR supervisors scab on workers who are defending jobs, their actions are defended by officials. The local ASLEF committee are also refusing to assist in any way what they see as actions in breach of the all sacred 'agreement'. In fact the only significant group who crossed the picket lines during a recent 24-hour strike in support of the cleaners were the 'militant' drivers' union.

So we see from these examples the result of the 'friendly society' approach of the rail unions: job loss and 'voluntary' redundancy.

On the workshop side, the situation is a little different. For a start, the confederation unions do not have the 'railway servant' approach to the job. Policy for the AUEW for instance is made by the National Committee to cover engineering as a whole. Those who work on the railways must follow policy agreed for outside sectors. Engineers are seen as engineers, not as railwaymen. Indeed, last year's agreement was not signed by the confed representatives and we officially have no agreement with BR at present. This means in effect that there exists much greater local autonomy on the question of opposition to redundancy. Any engineering workshop which opposed redundancy would, because of AUEW policy, gain the automatic support of the executive for actions taken to fight them.

Workshop problems

The main workshops have their own problems, with redundancies being declared at Crewe and Glasgow and with the threatened closure of Ashford Carriage and Wagon works. In particular it is now clear that the Rail Board are trying also for substantial reductions in the number of apprentices—an action which the recent AUEW annual delegate conference condemned and agreed to press for reversal. Unfortunately there appears to be little will to fight, the concern being to achieve early retirement schemes. In some quarters, there seems to exist a rather naive belief that the jobs will pick up again. Just when, however, no one can say.

So the prospect for a fight back on the rail seems at present pretty remote. The main unions—NUR/ASLEF/TSSA—will huff and puff for the next few weeks, but when it comes to it, they will accept what is offered in the 'interest of the industry as a whole in the present economic climate.' That will mean more redundancies and if Parker is clever he will get away with it, providing he only cuts people and not rail lines.

Jim Scott

NUJ: wanted, organisation

[illegible]

Clawing back some cuts

You may have had even more difficulty in catching a bus in London than usual over the past four weeks. London Transport have decided that we are running too efficient a service and decided to make further cuts. The GLC had given them a budget which, no matter which way it was stretched, could not provide enough cash to run the scheduled mileage. They therefore decided to cut back on the number of buses by cutting the overtime. Good, you think, socialists are opposed to overtime too, however in this case it would not have resulted in a single extra worker taken off the dole, just bus cuts.

This was to coincide with a massive reorganisation due to take place on April 25th and after much confusion and mind changing the TGWU central bus conference resolved to oppose these cuts and not to co-operate in any way with the April changes.

As soon as the information reached the garages there were explosions and a wave of unofficial action swept the fleet. So spontaneous was this that it is very hard to catalogue what exactly happened. About 25 garages were involved in some way or another from one day strikes and short guerrilla strikes to working to rule and overtime bans, mainly happening in the East and South where the cuts hit hardest. The most notable incident occurred at Upton Park where the garage struck for two days over a management attempt to victimise some garage inspectors who refused to implement the cuts and nearly all the neighbouring garages took supporting action.

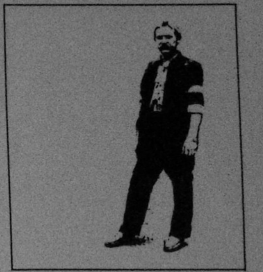
So far so good, then came the meeting of the delegates conference. Management had had several meetings with the Central Bus Committee (CBC) and had agreed to withdraw about half the cuts, and the CBC recommended that conference accept this. The only alternative was said to be an all out strike on the 25th. In the face of this ultimatum the conference voted 48-18 to accept the deal.

The problem all the way through has been that in a whole number of garages the information on the cuts was played down and nothing done to stir up the membership. This meant that while two thirds of the fleet were either taking action or waiting to be called on expectantly, the rest sat in blissful ignorance. The *Bus Worker* group produced a couple of leaflets which argued the case well for action, but unfortunately the garages most in need of them were effectively closed off.

There's a lesson for the future in this. With the fleet split in such a manner, any action would have been difficult to organise but not impossible. If it had not been put as an ultimatum everyone out or nothing, it would have been possible to co-ordinate and intensify the partial action and build up the resistance. As it was we clawed back some of the cuts and showed our teeth for the first time in a long time. If nothing else we showed that London's busworkers are prepared to fight—if we can now unite with our colleagues on the underground we can have London by the short hair.

Steve Cushion

Poland: can they reform the party?



The last weeks of April saw unaccustomed quietness on the industrial front in Poland. The regime has clearly still been on the defensive since the huge success of the warning four hour general strike of 27 March. But the feeling of intense crisis has not gone from the country. The bankers have been told that Poland cannot pay its debt repayments—and only their forebearance prevented a formal declaration of bankruptcy a fortnight ago, and now there is intense agitation within the Communist Party as preparations are made for a special congress in the summer against clear signs of Russian disapproval. Chris Harman looks at the significance of these two sets of developments.

Many commentators in the West now see the calling of a Communist Party Congress in the summer as the answer to the Polish crisis. They are wrong. Those who rule Poland cannot solve its crisis on their own terms unless they can first defeat the independent trade union movement. Nevertheless, the agitation developing inside the party is of immense importance.

It is usual to say that the Communist Party runs Poland and the other Eastern states. If you believe that, then naturally you believe that the Party congress can bring about a fundamental change in society.

But in fact it is not the party that rules, but a relatively small group of people at the top, not only of the party, but also of the other bureaucratic structures that dominate the society—the government ministeries, the state economic planning mechanism, the police, the armed forces. The party is a mechanism of their rule (and of their protectors in Moscow)—perhaps the most important mechanism—but it itself does not rule.

At its highest level the party is a meeting place for the top people in the different sections of the bureaucracy. Through the politbureau (in some countries called the presidium) and the secretariat they get together, hammer out the policies that suit their goals of international military and economic competition, and choose the personnel who they think will pursue these goals at lower levels in the bureaucracy. It is here, too that decisions are made as to who will head the government, the armed forces, the economy, the police, the party itself.

It is not the Communist Party that rules in Eastern Europe but a small group at the top.

But at its lower levels, the party is also a means for integrating other social groups into acceptance of the needs of the central bureaucratic rulers. It is run by the ruling class, but its membership includes people from all other classes.

It recruits members of these classes so as to encourage them to argue for its goals among those they work and live with. In return it offers them certain rewards—material rewards once they climb up beyond a certain point in the party (better promotion prospects in industry, a greater chance of getting decent housing, access to the better schools and colleges for their children). But it also offers them rewards of a not directly material sort—in the party people can mix with their 'betters', or can feel that somehow they are contributing to building society. So the party recruits not only self-seekers, but a certain breed of do-gooders.

By no means unique

In this, of course, the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe are by no means unique—the reasons people join them are not all that different to the reasons people join, say, the Christian Democracy in Italy or the Democratic Party in the cities of America. All of these are ruling class parties which seek to mobilise popular support for their goals.

The only difference with the East European parties is that in normal times, there can be no real argument among those at the bottom as to the directives issued from above—expulsion is the instant remedy for those who argue too much, and if that does not work, there are always the political police.

The party acts as a powerful controlling mechanism because to get on in any sphere of life, you have to join it. And once inside you have to defend the decisions made at the top. So if you are a factory worker, you can certainly suggest through the party how productivity can be raised by you and your mates working harder—but most of the time your job is not to suggest, but to listen to instructions on how to agitate to achieve the goals of management.

But the real importance of the party probably lies in the mechanisms for control over the 'middle layers' of society—the managers, technologists, journalists and so on who have themselves to determine the actions and ideas of those below them. Journalists for instance, need to have a certain freedom to decide themselves what they write if it is to be convincing to workers, yet also have to be bound in to the needs of the regime. This is achieved by making any progress inside a newspaper office dependent on taking a party card, and any progress inside the party dependent upon zeal in fulfilling the goals of the party leaders.

A hierarchy of bodies bind those non-ruling class party members to the top bureaucrats—branches, local committees, and, just below the top, the Central Committee. The full-time officials who run these bodies are appointed by the party secretariat under the so-called Nomenklatura system.

The whole structure is self-perpetuating: the secretariat chooses the branch and area officials; these then select who enters the party, determine who will receive promotion and special favours, and choose the delegates to congresses; the congress in turn elects a new Central Committee on the basis of recommendations from the secretariat and politbureau, the Central Committee then selecting the politbureau and secretariat. In this way, a vast system of transmission belts ensures penetration by the top bureaucrats of every level of society.

In normal times the structure seems all-powerful. It can work with immense success to ruin the job prospects and careers of anyone who opposes the top bureaucracy. Only a very small hard-core of determined dissidents will risk being squeezed right out of their jobs by continuing resistance to the regime.

But there are two ways in which the mechanism can jam.

The first is when the top bureaucrats in the politbureau and secretariat cannot agree among themselves on what needs to be done to maintain international competitiveness and control over the rest of society. Each side in the disagreement is forced to appeal to the slightly lower level bureaucrats of the Central Committee to settle the differences. But an argument which rages among a couple of hundred people is not always that easy to keep quiet. For instance, some of the politbureau and Central Committee members may decide to use their control over the security forces to quieten their opponents (this happened in Russia when Khruschev fell out with 'the anti-party group' in the late 1950s, it happened in Czechoslovakia early in 1968), and others may respond by using their control of the press to mobilise 'public

opinion' in their defence.

In such situations, the transmission belts cease to function for a period, and first members of the middle layers, and then workers, can begin to organise in their own interests.

A second sort of breakdown occurs when there is a mass spontaneous movement below, against the whole structure of bureaucratic control—as in Hungary and to a lesser extent in Poland in 1956. In that case, the party members suddenly find themselves isolated in the factories and the offices and respond by isolating the most dedicated supporters of the top bureaucracy within the party bodies themselves. The transmission belts begin to snap under the tensions created.

In Poland today we are witnessing a complex interaction of the two forms of breakdown. Last summer saw the upsurge of the mass spontaneous movement from below, culminating in the consolidation of Solidarity (and now rural Solidarity) as an organisation completely apart from the transmission belts. The party made a last effort to use its disciplinary powers over its members to get them to stop March's four-hour general strike. Their refusal to comply showed that its transmission belts in the factories had snapped completely—instead of party members damping down their workmates they abandoned the party (200,000 people have left it in six months).

Isolation

Of course, the regime still has considerable power—it still controls the planning mechanism, the police, the army, the prisons etc. But it knows that the forces it controls are enormously isolated from every other social group. And this at a time when its goal of restoring the competitiveness of the national economy cannot be achieved without forcing or persuading the population at large to accept big cuts in living standards and high levels of unemployment.

It was this isolation which led the Central Committee meeting late in March to opt for a party congress to reform the party.

What this really amounts to is an attempt to get the middle layers—the managers, technocrats, journalists—to identify with the reforms suggested by the top bureaucracy as the way out of the economic and social crisis. In return for acceptance of these reforms, sections of the middle layers are offered a new say inside the structures of the party. The most disliked and the most corrupt officials are to be replaced by new blood which has much greater support in the localities. To this end, the delegates to the congress are to be chosen on a much more open basis than in the past.

A reinvigorated party will then be able to impose austerity on the rest of the population in the interests of restoring the international competitiveness of the economy, in a way that is impossible at the moment.

That, at least, is the aim of Kania and his circle. That is why they have been permitting things which would have been inconceivable six months ago—like meetings of party activists outside the ambit of the official structures.

But there is one big problem with any such scheme. Rather than overcoming the isolation of the top bureaucracy, it can deepen it.

On the one hand, those under attack as delegates are chosen for the special congress will be the only group within the middle layers it can rely upon for support—those who have feathered their own nests through wholesale corruption and systematic bullying.

On the other, once debate opens in the party, the vast mass of previously passive party members in the factories and countryside can begin to raise their voices, reflecting the impact on them of the immense prestige of Solidarity and the experience of months of massive struggles. Under such circumstances, still more of the party's transmissions belts can snap. This is why the Russians are so worried about the party congress.

A party constituted to run society for the top bureaucrats cannot initiate the fundamental revolutionary change that is necessary if Poland is to escape the crisis without massive suffering to the working class. But its congress can serve to emphasise just how isolated and inept the old rulers are. It could be just one more nail in their coffin rather than the kiss of life which they need.

. . . and can they reform the economy?

> 'Spiritual bankruptcy, long tolerated, verging towards economical bankruptcy, becomes intolerable'.

Thomas Carlyle's comments on the unleashing of the forces that produced the great French revolution of 1789-95 sum up precisely the situation in Poland today. Economic crisis has been the midwife of social and political upheaval.

In a document presented to Western bankers last month the Polish regime spelled out the scale of the crisis. (Details published in *The Times* 16 April 1981). It warns that

> 'Despite plans for rigorous austerity programmes at home, the country's foreign debt will continue to rise until the end of 1985, when it will amount to £15,700m.'

This year 'severely restricted' imports will still cost $700m more than export earnings—and on top of this some billions have to be found to pay interest on debts.

The 'austerity' designed to cure this crisis is what we would call in the West a Thatcherite slump.

There will be 'a deep deterioration' of economic activity this year leading to a nine per cent fall in the national income. This will involve 'some reduction in employment'.

'We have to realise that a certain number of people will not be able to find new jobs.' Alongside this there will be a general reduction in living standards (a 'very painful operation') to be brought about by 'widespread increases in prices, including prices for essential foodstuffs.'

Between this year and 1983 '900 mainly big and medium investment projects' will have to be suspended—forcing their workers (700,000 or 800,000) to look for new jobs.

It is the sheer scale of this crisis and of the 'sacrifices' needed to pay off the bankers that lies behind the economic reform programme being floated by the regime.

The outline of one version of economic reform was published by the Polish regime early in January to be introduced in three stages starting in the early summer (details in *Financial Times*, 13 January 1981).

The basic idea is that factories should cease to be dictated to by the central planners, and that instead each enterprise should decide on its own production targets and find its own finance for achieving these. 'profitability would be the measure of a factory's efficiency'.

The link between enterprises would be the market—which, as the Polish currency became convertible, would also be the link with suppliers and buyers abroad.

For an interim period enterprises would, however, be forbidden to undertake new investments—apart from those which would increase food production, help production and exports of raw materials and introduce energy saving technology.

The reform has been compared to that operating in Hungary for a number of years now. But in one important respect it goes further than that—it talks about 'workers' councils' playing a key role in the factory, as in the Yugoslav system. These would have 'control over the factory and its administrators', with powers over 'production planning', the determination of 'promotion, bonus payments and profit distribution', being able to propose candidates for directorships and to recommend directors' 'dismissal by higher authorities'.

A close look at the reform proposals, however, shows two things: that the workers' democracy would be a sham, and that the reform would be unlikely to deal with the fundamental faults in the economy from a workers' standpoint.

First the sham. The workers would have powers which were restricted to questions of collaborating with management in the operation of the enterprises inside a tight, unchallengeable external framework. To keep the enterprises in business, they would have to keep their costs competitive, which would mean keeping tight control over their wages and productivity. Full competitiveness would involve buying machinery based on new technology—but that would mean raising the funds by ploughing nearly all profits back into the business and borrowing from the banks. The banks in return would demand a controlling power over the enterprise: the situation would be like that in Yugoslavia, where the central banks control 50 per cent of industrial assets despite the pretence of 'workers' control' (figures in *Economic Intelligence Unit Quarterly Report on Yugoslavia* 1971/2).

'It has been competition, albeit at an international level, which has produced the present chaos inside the Polish economy.'

The Polish draft reform proposals spell out, in fact, that for 'large industrial trusts containing several factories' there are to be 'supervisory boards containing delegates from banks, suppliers, consumers and workers councils'. In fact, the only power the workers would end up with would be that of tightening their own belts and sacking their own colleagues at the banks' behest.

This is very much in the minds of various managers who have expressed support for the reform.

For example, a mines director in Silesia told the *Financial Times:*

> "I'm for a joint worker-management board, if they assume responsibility by remembering that they are the co-owners of the means of production" (23 January)

Most of the enthusiasm for the economic reform proposals comes from sections of intellectuals and managers. They see reform as a way to draw the workers' movement into pushing their schemes for overcoming the irrationality of the economy.

The prevailing attitude of this milieu to the present economic set-up was revealed very clearly in a series of interviews with intellectuals and specialists carried out two years ago *(The Report on the State of the Republic)*

One respondent put it:

> 'We are faced with sham planning and sham implementation of plans.'
>
> Another spelt out that:
>
> 'In the real social and economic world there is no such thing as "the central planner". What we are dealing with instead is a heterogenous amalgamation of central institutions which employ a wide range of different standards in arriving at their decisions.. We know very little about how the centre does its work or the way in which it drafts and adopts strategic economic decisions-...Many professional economists and economic policy makers are unable to come up with any answers to these questions...'

The overall impression that emerges is one that seems, on the face of it, favourable to defenders of the 'free market' in the West. 'Central planning' has produced apparently irrational structures, characterised by random decision making, immense waste and complete stagnation. So convincing does such an argument seem that it has even taken in a whole number of Western Marxists (like the people around the journal *Critique* in this country) who see the Eastern states as completely new forms of class societies which are intrinsically less dynamic and probably less progressive than capitalism.

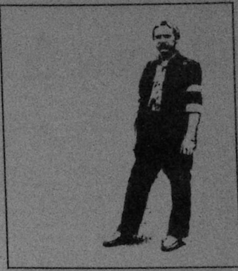
Yet any such view ignores the most basic fact about the Eastern states—that it has been competition, albeit at an *international* level, which has produced the present chaos inside the economy. The rulers of all these countries have sought to impose on the rest of the population fantastically high levels of accumulation so as to have the means to survive in economic and military competition with the West and with China. All the irrationality within the economies can be seen to flow from the attempt to sustain a scale of accumulation beyond the resources of the various countries.

It is this which leads to 'tension' within plans, to continual shortages of key raw materials and components, to the continual switching of the orders given to factories as to what to produce, to huge sums being spent on investment projects that cannot be finished, to bullying of managers by planners and cynicism towards planners by managers, to a general inability to work out what is the real cost of producing goods in terms of labour and materials. It is the continual drive to over-accumulation that produces the chaos.

A world system

These trends seem absurd if the economy is looked at in isolation. After all, unless the central planners are mad, they cannot want such chaos. It is easy to draw the conclusion that these effects are inherent in the attempt to plan, and that the profit motive and market could not do worse. However, it all makes sense the moment you see the Polish ruling group as part of a world system, constrained to accumulate as fast as possible—indeed, faster than possible—on the one hand by the need to compete in Western markets to sell goods and pay off debts, on the other by the pressure to contribute to the expansion of the Russian arms economy.

The most wasteful features of the Polish economy are not unique. The unfinished investment projects are not really all that different to the brand new steel mills that

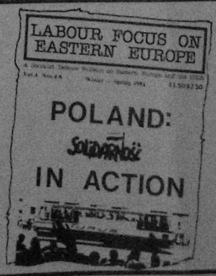


British Steel has working at less than 50 per cent capacity. The useless goods that are turned out have their match in the most expensive product of the British aerospace industry in the last 15 years—the Concorde-folly which can only fly at a loss. Delorean, a former top General Motors manager, has written a book about the world's largest private capitalist firm that shows that things within it are not so different from the state capitalist firm of Poland Inc: he describes massive planning mishaps, bullying executives giving arbitrary instructions to plant managers, continual switches in production schedules, massive wastes of resources, general cynicism.

All these forms of waste and irrationality are a product of a world system, in which the individual units—individual firms or whole economies—are motivated only by competition with one another. But if that is so, reform within the Polish economy cannot solve its problems on more than a very short term basis.

So what can economic reform achieve?

All it can really do is operate as a cover for attempts to solve the Polish crisis at the expense of workers. Whole sections of the Polish economy must be sacrificed while others are given the chance to forge ahead (although, in the context of world recession that too can be just a pipedream). But if you sacrifice sections of the economy, you sacrifice the workers employed there. The slogan of reform can make that easier—with workers' council participation in management providing a means by which workers in 'successful' enterprises are turned against those that are chopped.



Essential reading on the Polish crisis

Labour focus on Eastern Europe

Annual subscription £4.50 in Britain, £5.50 outside from Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Box 23, Kingsland High Street, London, E8.

Glasgow Orange

'If we can stir up religious feeling in Scotland we have won.' These are words which have been taken to heart by Ian Paisley. They were in fact spoken in 1886 as part of the opposition to Irish Home Rule by James Henderson, editor of the *Belfast Newsletter*.

As one of his stops on the 'Carson Trail', Paisley last month organised a rally in Glasgow — a planned march had to be abandoned after a three month ban on all marches resulted from Loyalist threats to break up a H-block protest. Paisley with his strong Scottish roots — his mother comes from Edinburgh — realises there is fertile ground for his anti-Catholic crusade. Chris Bambery **looks at the tradition of religious sectarianism in Scotland, and then** Dave Sherry **tells what is being done to combat it.**

With unemployment on Clydeside standing at 15% and the closure of Linwood graphically showing the failure of the unions to stop the rot, there are many people ready to hit out at anyone in their despair. In previous times of economic uncertainty, such feelings have led to sectarian violence.

The 1930's saw rival 'razor gangs', with names like the Bridgeton Billy Boys fight out pitched battles in the streets. Outfits like the Scottish Protestant League could take seven seats on Glasgow council in the 1934 elections, with Protestant Action taking nine in liberal Edinburgh and holding one till the mid-60s. Protestant Action also organised and stewarded rallies for Moseley and his fascists in Glasgow, and were responsible for attacks on Jewish as well as Catholic property. But the traditional vehicle for sectarianism remained the Orange Lodge. Following the 1935 12th of July walk Orangemen marched into Catholic areas like the Gorbals, Calton and Shettleton. Fierce rioting ensued, with police baton charging protesters in the Gorbals.

Famine

The roots of sectarianism lie with the spectacular Irish immigration of the last century. By 1851 there were three quarters of a million people of Irish descent in Scotland, while one in four of Glasgow's population were Irish. For an immigrant fleeing the Famine, Glasgow was the nearest and cheapest option, but hardly the most attractive. Not only were immigrants crowded into ghettoes like the Gorbals — "The Second Capital of Donegal" — but their children were denied state education and, as a government report said, "They formed the great body of unskilled casual labour in Glasgow". To be a Catholic was to be virtually excluded from the shipyards, the pits and any skilled work.

The start of large scale immigration in the 1830's coincided with an economic recession. Employers like the Duke of Hamilton were quick to blame the immigrants for unemployment, wage cuts and outbreaks of cholera and typhus. But while he might call for an end to Irish immigration, the Duke was quick to bring in Irish scabs when his mines came out on strike. The effect of this blacklegging was immediate as noted by a government report: "A lodge of pitmen expelled all Catholics with whom they had previously lived and worked in peace and harmony". In the Lanarkshire coal and iron towns a rigid sectarian geography developed.

With Irish immigrants also in direct competition with evicted Highlanders, for jobs building the railways and canals, anti-Irish feeling was reflected in the growth of the Orange Order. The Order, first imported by Scots regiments sent to crush the 1798 United Irishman rising, had 45 Lodges in Scotland by 1833, with 12 in Glasgow, under the patronage of the Duke of Gordon.

Hard Loyalism

Employers were quick to use such a useful tool as sectarianism. In the 1850s they encouraged a number of bigoted preachers like the 'Angel Gabriel', who dressed to suit his name. After meetings by him trouble broke out in Greenock's sugar refineries and docks and, in 1855, Catholic labourers were driven from the shipyards in Dumbarton. That year also saw Lanarkshire miners coming out on strike after trouble on July 12th to demand the removal of Catholics from the pits.

But sectarianism wasn't imply created by the bosses. Scotland's close connections with Ireland and Ulster in particular, meant events there were reflected by violence in Glasgow. Following a tour by Daniel O'Connell in 1835 when he spoke in support of Catholic Emancipation to 100,000 on Glasgow Green, a Protestant Association, with 85,000 supporters, was formed to defend 'the faith and constitution'. The worst outbreak of violence came in 1875 after Home Rule supporters were attacked in Partick. An all out anti-Catholic pogrom developed, with the militia needed to restore order.

But most trade union leaders and Labour politicians would say this is simply history. After all, in Glasgow today people might drink in separate pubs, go to separate schools and follow separate football teams but there's no more discrimination in jobs, and the old ghettoes are long demolished.

And it is quite clear Glasgow isn't Belfast. To be a Protestant doesn't mean you've a better chance of a job or a house. There isn't the likelihood of an Orange pogrom.

Photo: Neil Martinson

But recently a hard right wing Loyalism has emerged in Glasgow. Really it was never far away. Even in 1970 a Loyalist candidate in Bridgeton could pick up 1180 votes, while Irish marches were kept off Glasgow's streets for six years because of Loyalist violence. We'd also seen UVF attacks on Catholic pubs, though on one occasion they sent up a Bridgeton Orange Lodge heavenwards when they stored gelignite in the oven and then switched it on to heat the pies!

Opening for Paisley

But what is different in 1981 is the discontent unemployment's created which can be channeled along traditional sectarian lines, and the fact that like their Northern Ireland brethren Glasgow's Loyalists feel betrayed. They believe Britain is selling Ulster out. They see the Pope coming to Glasgow next year as part of the conspiracy stretching from Thatcher to the Provos.

Loyalism in Glasgow could too easily be dismissed as rather bizarre. But a group like the Scottish Loyalists can bring 5000 people out on the streets. Their open links with the National Front mean, however, most Orangemen see them as extremists — a view strengthened by recent boasts about running guns to the UDA, to whom they're closely linked.

But the Scottish Loyalists provided an opening for Paisley. Following an attack on an H-Block march in February Paisley jetted in to announce "If something is not done this city will be like Belfast". He then set out trying to make it as much like Belfast as he could.

Paisley has formed the 'Scottish Constitutional Defence Committee' headed by Pastor David Cassells, an ex- RUC man and a cousin of Paisley's wife. With its more traditional Loyalist politics, the Defence Committee can draw on support from within the Orange Lodges themselves. Already they have threatened to defy the ban on marches in Strathclyde and have promised further marches and rallies. The Pope's visit next year provides them with a real focus.

An Orange backlash isn't inevitable in Glasgow. The majority of Scotland's 120,000 Orangemen are union members and vote Labour. The basic anger is against the Tories, as shown on the February 21st jobs march. But sectarianism will gain a hold if there is no fight back against the Tories and if the union leaders continue to sweep the issue under the carpet.

In that we can learn from *our* history. At the beginning of the century with the Home Rule crisis and the Irish War of Independence one would have expected a huge Orange backlash on Clydeside. It didn't happen, because there was a strong socialist movement and a militant shop stewards organisation. There were marches and rallies of course, and guns were run from the Clyde, but there was also a movement fighting for a 40-hour week and against rent rises. That movement could answer sectarian arguments and it didn't sweep Ireland under the carpet. John McLean could sell 35,000 copies of his "Ireland's Tragedy, Scotland's Disgrace" and organise a series of rallies in support of Irish independence.

Today we have to do the same. The answer to sectarianism is building the Right to Work Campaign to fight unemployment and a strong socialist organisation which can take up the arguments on the factory floor. That's the way to make sure Paisley goes unheard.

Chris Bambery

Glasgow Red

Some people are fond of saying that Ireland is Britain's Vietnam. Yet the impact of the Irish war on the British mainland is, as yet, nowhere near as great as the impact Vietnam made in the USA.

The war hasn't had the direct impact on ordinary people that Vietnam had for ordinary, apolitical Americans. And so the opportunities for socialists to build a solidarity campaign within the British working class movement are that much less.

The present impasse in the North is another obstacle. In Vietnam it became clear that the freedom fighters were winning. In Ireland the situation is different.

Faced with these obstacles what can and what should we be doing in Britain?

One approach is to ignore the problems that exist and to stand on the sidelines chanting the correct slogans but talking to no-one but the converted. The outcome is that Ireland becomes the property of the

In a very real sense, political

"There always seems to have been some embarrassment, among authors, a tendency to blur the fact that many of the bravest fighters in this cause have been Communists."

The 'cause' is the fight against apartheid. The speaker is Nadine Gordimer, interviewed in the *Guardian*. Not that she is a Marxist; according to the same interview she is only interested in politics 'insofar as they motivate people. I am not expounding a political theory.'

Given the nature of South African society, politics is inescapable for a writer of any seriousness and honesty. Nadine Gordimer has both and, despite her disclaimers, her books are, in a very real sense, political.

Living and writing in South Africa places her in an ambivalent position. In the wake of the Soweto rising white anti-racists have tended to feel pushed to the sidelines; yet she sees the formation of black trade unions (however limited) as, potentially, *the* decisive development. Three of her books have been banned.

Her most recent novel is *Burger's Daughter*. Lionel Burger, a leading Communist, is imprisoned and dies on Robben Island. His daughter, Rosa, has been brought up alongside a black child whom she is taught to regard as her brother. Her childhood is dominated by the needs of the struggle; shaped by police harrassment and the continual arrest of her parents.

The book explores the conflict between the demands of this world and her struggle to become an individual. It opens with a young girl waiting to visit her detained mother; her private self is there as well –

> "The bleeding began just after my father had made me go back to bed after my mother had been taken away. No pain; just wetness that I tested with my finger, turned on the light to verify; yes, blood. But outside the prison the internal landscape of my mysterious body turns me inside out, so that in that public place on the public occasion . . . I am within that monthly crisis of destruction, the purging, tearing, draining of my own structure".

She is asked to visit a young detainee. Posing as his sweetheart she is able to tell him whatever the movement needs him to know. Ironically, she falls in love with him but her attempts to tell him so founder because they appear part of the pretence.

After her father's death she seeks to free herself, not from his ideals but from her restricted world. She manages to obtain a passport, knowing this will seem a defection from her political heritage. In London she meets her black brother, with whom she lost contact years ago. He bitterly denounces her family's struggle as remote from the realities of black South Africa. Rosa's view of her history is thrown into turmoil. It looks as though her defection will become complete. Instead, she goes home –

> "No-one can defect. I don't know the ideology. It's about suffering. How to end suffering. And it ends in suffering . . . Like anyone else, I do what I can. I am teaching them to walk again, at Baragwanath Hospital. They put one foot before the other."

As Soweto erupts she finds herself dealing with those crippled not by nature but the guns and clubs of the police.

In this heightened political atmosphere she again merits the attention of the security forces. In October 1977 she along with hundred of blacks, is detained without charges. The book closes with Rosa in prison, awaiting trial. She has found that even simple revulsion from human suffering has led her back to the political arena, to being 'Burger's daughter'.

Nadine Gordimer's handling of the tensions between personal and political imperatives is brilliant and the details of political practice have the ring of truth. Rosa's dilemma is sensitively drawn and revolutionary commitment remains, throughout, a credible option.

Where the Burgers are outcasts,

Nadine Gordimer

Mehring in *The Conservationist* is a solid citizen, a successful businessman with a farm where, at weekends, he can escape the pressures of the commercial world. The farm is an attempt to find permanence – his personal retreat to the laager.

His rural peace is marred when a corpse turns up in his pasture. He calls the police who don't want to come: dead 'kaffirs' can wait. When he insists, they simply bury the body where they find it, killer and identity unknown, and forget about it. There it remains; a half-remembered presence, an obscure threat to Mehring's world.

Mehring is a racist, sexist, deeply conservative white South African. Through his eyes we see his gay son 'who doesn't want to be a man' and fight freedom-fighters in Namibia, his estranged wife and his 'trendily left-wing' mistress who mocks the fortune he has made in pig-iron and confidently predicts his extinction as a type. He is the classic paternalist. To him the black farm labourers are wayward, overgrown children, helpless without a strong, guiding white hand. Yet Mehring is drawn as a real person, not merely a focus for our hatred.

Where the whites are only extensions of Mehring's consciousness, the dialogue, actions and characters of the blacks are fully and independently developed. When a flood threaten the farm and the 'master' cannot reach it, they cope – with complete mastery. This is a subtle, but effective device for exploding Mehring's racism.

The Conservationist is pervaded by images of flood, fire and catastrophe, prefiguring the tide of black anger which from Mehring's point of view, threatens to engulf society. The portrait of Mehring is the portrait of a man for whom time has already run out. The descriptive passages are extremely beautiful, creating a dense, highly charged atmosphere. The disaster that overtakes Mehring in the book's astonishing climax provides a powerful epitaph for the white supremacists.

Nadine Gordimer's work raises more questions than it answers about her political stance. The reason she stays in South Africa furnished one clue –

> "If you are born in and committed to a particular place, the most meaningful way of life for you will be in taking up whatever challenges there are in that place."

That may be the basis of a personal, rather than political, philosophy, but it has certainly enabled her to produce work that takes up the challenge of the crucial political issue in Southern Africa; smashing apartheid.

Steve Kendall

Books mentioned
Burger's Daughter –
Recently issued by Penguin at £1.95
The Conservationist –
Penguin 95p.

Reactionary force

In the April *Socialist Review* Sally Bild and Caroline Conway alluded to the antics of *Militant* in the civil service pay campaign. Readers may be interested to know that this group's backsliding is quite in keeping with its record in the CPSA which cannot be described as anything other than disgraceful.

Back in late 1979 over 500 CPSA members were locked out of the Glasgow branch of the Department of National Savings for fighting the cuts. Together with Peter Coltman (then CPSA vice-president, and a CP member), full-time official Terry Adams, a *Militant* supporter, concocted a behind-the-scenes deal with management which was then presented to the branch as a fait accompli. Adams:

> 'Outlined the case for accepting these proposals. He stated that the only alternative to an orderly return to work was an all-out strike by members at the Bank. Terry stressed that the CPSA should not allow itself to be provoked into a premature, all out battle with suspensions. Management would like nothing better than to drain the financial resources and energy of the union before the massive cuts which are imminent.' (*Militant*, 7 December 1979)

How a fight against 'imminent' cuts can be 'premature' is beyond me. On the 6 December cuts of 1090 jobs were announced for the DNS.

Adams obviously has no confidence in the ability of CPSA members to fight and preferred to betray the membership than extend the lock-out into an all-out strike. The DNS affair was very demoralising. There has been little action against the cuts since then. In 1980 *Militant* supporter Pat Byrne, then on the CPSA NEC, whined 'In the civil service we have been cut first by 60,000 posts and then by another 15,000 jobs as part of the price for our pay increase this year.' (*Militant*, 25 April 1980). Byrne forgets to say that along with fellow *Militant* supporters Steve Appleton and Kevin Roddy, he actually voted on the NEC to recommend acceptance of that deal. And the 1980 CPSA conference saw a glut of sycophantic *Militant*-inspired motions which supported the union leadership's betrayals on this issue.

1980 also brought the Brixton Dole strike. Despite the enormous significance of this issues *Militant* supporters were few and far between on the pickets. The most I ever saw was four—and that was on one of the well-advertised mass pickets. *Militant* cannot plead lack of resources; there are several dozen supporters in the CPSA in London. They were not interested because it wasn't their supporters who were being victimised and they could see little to be gained as a group from the dispute.

This sectarianism is in stark contrast to the Terry Adams affair a few years ago. In this case Adams, the *Militant* supporter of DNS fame, was on his probation as a full-timer and was blatantly witch-hunted by a right-wing NEC. The whole of the left in the CPSA rallied round and defeated the witch-hunt.

This leads on to another thing. One of *Militant's* tactics is to get into the union bureaucracy. There are two *Militant* supporters who are full-timers in the CPSA and whose wages are something like twice the average of CPSA members. They are not elected nor are they subject to recall. I've shown just one issue where one of them has sold out an important dispute. I've also shown that *Militant* is a very reactionary force within the CPSA. Perhaps other readers can give some examples both within and without the CPSA where this powerful organisation has sold out union members.

CPSA activist

CND replies

A very good survey of the phenomenal growth of CND (*SR* 21 'The largest Mass Movement Yet') was spoiled by some gratuitous and incorrect remarks about the national organisation of CND.

The idea that we have 'done very little to build local groups' is frankly absurd. Please consider the following:

1) CND currently gets about 900 letters asking for further information each week. These are forwarded to local group organisers as well as being answered from the national office.

2) CND used to distribute *The War Game* from the national office, and at the time of handing over this work to a full-time film distributor we were supplying it to approximately 15 groups per week. We negotiated a deal with the Concord film council (who now have some twenty prints—all booked all the time) and help groups, still, to order it from them.

3) CND national speakers can be found at meetings and conferences every night of every week. Thanks to the expansion of regional organisations of CND sometimes regional speakers attend founding meetings of groups for purposes of advice and encouragement, but in general national speakers will be found at the start of every CND group.

4) CND helps local groups as far as possible with information and press relations work. All they need do is write or phone.

5) CND holds a national conference for all members and groups each year. This year we also have organised an additional campaign conference, youth conference and labour movement conference. The national organisation also helps put on conferences (all quite major events these days) for the CND specialist sections.

6) CND organises national demonstrations—there are two more this year.

7) CND runs a quite large publishing department. This year we will publish 12 pamphlets. We also publish stickers, posters, badges and a monthly paper in addition to leaflets. All this material is available to local groups at large discounts.

8) At the moment national CND has very ambitious plans to help CND regions establish offices with full-time staff. We at the national office will provide much of the money for this and, who knows, hopefully the regions in turn may be able to provide full time workers in the localities.

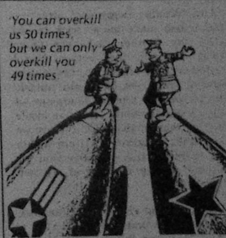
But these are no boasts and certainly no reason for national CND to sit on our laurels. Often the rate of growth of the campaign outstrips our ability to service groups *as fully* as we would wish. Constant consideration is given to making sure scarce resources are used to the full.

I was baffled by the comment you reported from an unidentified 'person from Manchester' to the effect that they never see our publications—she or he must, literally, be one in a million.

Over the past twelve months the circulation of national CND's magazine *Sanity* has increased from 5,000 to 55,000. We have printed and distributed three quarters of a million leaflets. For a long time *Protest and Survive*, a pamphlet we jointly published with The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was on everyone's mind. Our other titles are bought at a rate of over 5,000 per month per title (on average) by local groups alone. Of course, in the present situation, we can never produce enough and there have been distribution problems.

To conclude, *Socialist Review* is absolutely right to emphasise the growth of local CND groups rather than CND as a national organisation. The latter exists to service the former and, I believe, the 'two-tier' membership structure of local CND members joining local groups at often quite a small fee with the core of members joining the national organisation—in large part to fund CND publications and activities that build and support new groups—is working very well. If there are 'problems' with national CND, this doesn't appear to prevent a steady 400-500 new members (many from local groups) joining each week.

Chris Horrie
Secretary
CND publications committee



MISSILE MADNESS

SWP pamphlet by Peter Binns on the new weapons system and how they threaten your life. 40p (plus 10p postage). Bulk orders £3.25 for 10 post free from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

Quietly subversive

It is not often that a television drama challenges directly the view of themselves the British establishment advances for our consumption, but the *Law and Order* series, screened three years ago and directed by Leslie Blair did just that. There was a fierce outcry from the upper echelons of the police; the prison officers were so incensed that the BBC was later banned from filming in prisons. The BBC themselves were obviously rather unnerved by the response and have turned down a large number of overseas sales. Jane Ure Smith talked to Les Blair about his work.

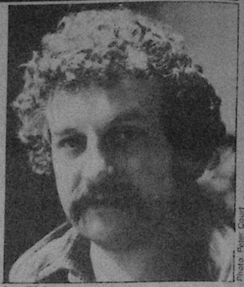


Photo Peter Court

Les Blair

The *Law and Order* series may have made the biggest splash in Les Blair's career, but none of the films he has made for television over the past ten years has been exactly pro-establishment. Their subversive power lies perhaps paradoxically in their very quietness, their tendency to understatement, their concern with detail; the naturalistic style works constantly to lay bare the reality beneath the surface, to grasp the world as it is.

'Everything that happens on television is propaganda,' Les Blair claims. 'And I try to propagandise, I suppose, but I try to do it in a way that doesn't alienate. I like to do quiet films which present a realistic image of the world. I could bend that image to suit my purposes. It's difficult because the mere process of making a film is bending reality. But there is a danger in denying the truth to make your point. If you do that you immediately alienate a whole section of the audience who might otherwise go along. What I try to do is not so much hit the middle ground but to *use* the middle ground to make a point.'

Beyond the Pale, screened last January, is a good example of how Blair's theory operates in practice. The film dealt with the racist response to Russian Jews arriving in Britain at the turn of the century as refugees from the Tsarist pogroms, a response which culminated in the Alien Immigration Act of 1903. The parallels with situation facing blacks and Asians in Britain today are inescapable.

'With *Beyond the Pale* I was dealing with a very specific period and I had to be very selective. The range of political response was enormous – even more than it is now – and I didn't want to produce a journalistic piece on the political landscape of the time. I selected an area that interested me, which was the area of the anarchist groups, and what I did was portray an image, the essential image of what had actually happened at the time.

'I could have bent that to demonstrate a political point, for example the need to organise politically against racism, but I would have found it very difficult to do because I was dealing with something that actually happened.

'What I tried to do in *Beyond the Pale* was show what happened in the context of today and to say if you're going to do this, these are the possible consequences.'

Beyond the Pale was an improvisation while *Law and Order* was heavily scripted. Yet stylistically the two have the same feel to them. The same feel is there in the excellent film *Only a Game*, a drama based on soccer player Eamon Dunphy's account of his days at Millwall, screened last month by Thames. How does Les Blair explain his own particular naturalistic style?

'It is a product of my response to the things that I've appreciated and liked in the evolution of British cinema. I think the realistic strain has always been the strongest strain right from Grierson's documentaries onwards. Documentary has always been a significant strain in British film-making and the response of dramatic film-making to how good those early documentaries were has always been important too. The response is evident in films like *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*.

'I feel the camera is about the real world. The whole point of the camera is that you can take it out into the real world and not be theatrical. My particular style has evolved out of an interest not so much in technicalities like acting style or camera style so much as an interest in content and subject matter. I just find it very difficult to involve myself in subject matter which is to do with the real world in a non-realistic way. I want my audience to recognise the people in the film.

'The real decider is the casting, it's the most important part of the process. I look for actors who have something to offer to the film other than the ability to do the lines. It's what they can contribute from their own experience that's important.'

Although he has worked in theatre, film has always been the most important medium for Les Blair. The bulk of his work has been for television rather than the cinema. How does he gauge the importance of his films in terms of their power to influence people?

'Quite honestly I don't feel I have the message to change the world. I have a view which obviously I think is the right view, it's perhaps a similar view to those held by people like Ken Loach, Tony Garnett and Gordon Newman who wrote *Law and Order*. With the set up as it is in this country television is probably the only place where that view can happen. Fortunately it's the place that gets the biggest audience. It's an irony really.

'But I don't think you can change the world through film. All you can do is polarise. I don't think you can persuade anybody. The most you can hope for is that two people in a room watching a programme might disagree and one can persuade the other. I don't think *Law and Order* changed the world, but I don't think that's any reason for *not* making films like that. It's a pebble on the beach but it's worth chucking.'

The next film Les Blair has lined up is called *The Nation's Health*, a joint venture with Gordon Newman. 'It's a controversial look at medicine in Britain, a kind of "Health and Order",' he says. And hopefully it's another pebble that might cause the odd ripple before getting lost on the beach.

Why not subscribe?
10 weeks trial £3
Six months £8.50
One year £17
From SW Subscriptions,
PO Box 82, London, E2.

New York women garment workers demonstrating against working conditions in 1901

Class war behind the sisterhood

The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict 1880-1917
Meredith Tax
Monthly Review Press £9.45

This book sets out to examine varous strategies of organising working class women by looking at nearly 40 years of American labour history. The practical conclusions of the author are confused, but the description of the lives and struggles of the working class in this period is marvellous.

Working conditions were horrific, wages hovered on minimum survival levels, the use of the state and militia to brutally crush strikes was normal practice. More than 20,000 textile workers in Lawrence struck in 1912 because of a 30 cents a week pay out. The cut in wages was the price of five loaves of bread—the difference between bare survival and starvation. Workers flooded out of the factories crying, 'Better to starve fighting than to starve working'.

Every strike was an example of stark class warfare. It was a period which, it seemed, would inevitably lead to revolution.

In the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of this century the American Federation of Labour (AFL) dominated trade union organisation. The AFL organised skilled workers into craft unions and refused to admit women into its ranks. Naturally this played right into the hands of the employers: unorganised low paid women workers kept down the wages of all workers and divided the class.

In desperation, without the support of the AFL, many working women appealed to middle class feminists for help. The Womens' Trade Union League (WTUL) stepped in, but, in the long run, provided little help at all.

The WTUL comprised of women from different classes and occupations, but was dominated by middle class women whose aim was to provide cultural education to women factory workers. The League helped with fund-raising for strikes, but it talked of uplifting and protecting women. After a bitter internal battle between those who saw moral uplift of prime importance and those who felt that trade union organisation of more help to working class women, the former won and the League sank into reporting on factory conditions and pressing for reforms such as a shorter working day for women—which was won with a corresponding loss of pay.

Meredith Tax quite rightly attacks the WTUL for being dominated by bourgeois feminists with little understanding of and quite different real interests to working class women. However, when she describes the activities of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or the Wobblies) around women, she rejects their analysis and practice as well.

The IWW was a stark contrast to the AFL in that it aimed to build one union for all workers. In reality it was much more than a trade union as they exist today: it continually taught Marxist economics and preached class warfare towards a revolutionary end.

The IWW maintained that it organised men and women on an equal basis, and throughout the strikes in whch the IWW was dominant the wives of strikers were encouraged to play an equal role on picket lines, in meetings and on strike committees.

The IWW rejected any notion of women making cross class alliances. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, its leading woman organiser, said:

> 'The queen in the parlour has no interest in common with the maid in the kitchen ... The sisterhood of women, like the brotherhood of men, is a hollow sham to labour. Behind all its smug hypocrisy and sickly sentimentality loom the sinister outlines of class war.'

Meredith Tax condemns the IWW as being 'economist', of reducing womens oppression to a manifestation of class society, and consequently failing to organise women seperately according to their special needs. Having accepted that the interests of bourgeois feminists are fundamentally different to those of working class women and having rejected the 'economism' of the IWW, she goes on to recommend ways of organising women in her final chapter, Practical Conclusions.

The question she attempts to answer is, 'Can women really unite across class lines to fight their common opression without betraying the revolution?' Tax says:

> 'Women's ultimate liberation demands socialist revolution as a precondition ... The opposing notion, common amonst socialist feminists, that the two struggles are separate but equal ... is static and inadequate. It leaves out the relationship between the struggles and the way each affects the other—not to mention the funamental fact that women are very much a part of the class struggle and their lives are entirely mediated by class relations. There is no struggle for women's liberation that is seperate and independent of class. Indeed, how could such a thing be? Such a picture of the world leads to work that is detached, disoriented, floating in limbo.'

In the 1980s, Tax says, the labour movement is weak and divided, and the women's movement is under bourgeois leadership. 'Surely we don't want to return to the nineteenth century doctrine of a separate sphere for women, where women can make decisions about a limited range of female concerns and men can make decisions about everything else.' No we don't, so the answer is unite, says Tax. The women's movement, the labour (trade union) movement and the socialist movement must unite to become 'a general movement to change society'.

Now that sounds very nice and very easy. There's one problem. The way we change society, for good and forever, is by a working class revolution. Unfortunately there are sections of the women's movement, the trade union movement and the socialist movement that are not interested in revolutionary change.

So to unite with people whose aims are different from ours for unspecified but fundamental 'change' would lead nowhere except to a centrist swamp. Our task is to build a revolutionary working class party, of men and women, to fight for both women's liberation and socialism. To that end—building the party—we will work in a united front on specific issues: abortion, fascism, nuclear arms. But let's keep hold on our revolutionary politics.

Harriet Sherwood

Womens Voice out now 25p
Available PO Box 82, London, E2.

It wasn't always thus ...

The German Family
Edited by R J Evans and W R Lee
Croom Helm £13.95

The common view of the family is of something eternal, unchanging, as natural as 'human nature' itself. Such a view is, of course, propagated by many defenders of existing society: the Catholic church, the Tory party and Labour politicians can all be relied on to voice deep concern about the future of the family. But, paradoxically, it is also implied in many fashionable feminist arguments: 'patriarchy' (literally, the rule of the father) is said to persist from one society to another, from feudalism through capitalism into socialism.

The 'house'

This book contains a useful corrective to such slipshod, unscientific ways of seeing things. The various essays in it describe some of the ways in which the family and the roles of men, women and children were transformed as German society moved from feudalism to industrial capitalism.

As Karin Hausen tells, neither the concept of the family nor the sexual stereotypes we associate with it existed before the latter end of the 18th century. Until then people spoke of the 'house' or the 'household', engaged in both production and consumption, in which a 'patriarch' (usually a man but on occasions a widow) laid down the law to the wife, the younger men, the children and the servants. Within this structure both men and women had defined productive roles, very different to the sexual stereotypes of the bourgeois family.

For example, it made no sense at all in the present household for women to be valued as 'weak, submissive, protective': rather, they were expected to be capable of hard physical labour, although of a different kind to that of the men.

In the same way children were viewed in a very different way to what we take for granted now. So, as Robert Lee notes, in early nineteenth century Bavaria once a couple of children had been reared to keep the household going, the rest were regarded as a burden: "The amount of attention given by parents to young children and particularly to infants remained minimal. In Mittelfels, for example, it was rumoured that a farmer would rather lose a young child than a calf."

Hostile world

But the risk of a new mode of production in the cities smashed the old 'household'. It was increasingly displaced by new forms of livelihood – based, for the middle classes, upon salaried employment in the world of business or the state. The new ideal which corresponded to this was that of the autonomous individual, cut off from all the old ties. At the close of the eighteenth century – the era of the French revolution – this briefly challenged all preceeding notions of hierarchy and authority.

But there could be no real autonomy for the individual in bourgeois society. Instead there was the competitive rat-race for the men, while the women were left to socialise the next generation in the home. Life became divided into 'the hostile world and the friendly family'. Women were redefined as creatures who kept the family together – the protective, submissive, caring, intuitive, not-fully-rational wives and mothers.

Women's nature

Novels, plays, church sermons and 'scientific' texts all endorsed this ideal as 'female nature'. By the end of the last century the stereotype was so widespread, that it was even adopted by the 'bourgeois women's movement': as Karin Hausen notes, it based itself on a notion that it was 'the cultural task of women' to bring humanity, through their feminity, into 'the inhuman world of men' – a notion that still persists today in some sections of the women's liberation movement (how often have we heard so much nonsense about how the women's movement can teach 'new forms of organisation'?).

The new notions of the family and 'women's nature' began to percolate all of society (as Karl Marx noted, 'the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class'). But they never fitted other classes in the same way as they fitted the middle classes. In the countryside the old household persisted as a source of foodstuffs for the capitalist market well into the twentieth century, so that men still valued wives for their productive power rather than for their 'feminine' qualities: as one bemused observer noted a century ago, the 'characteristic' differences of the sexes were not to be found here, for 'the voices, the facial features and the behaviour of both sexes are very similar'.

Family wage

Among industrial workers things were a little more complex. As the old peasant family was broken up, the ideologues of the ruling class attempted to persuade workers to accept the values of the bourgeois family: they saw it as a means of ensuring that a new generation of workers was physically nurtured and they feared that a weakening of the family would open women and children to some of the pernicious socialist ideas growing in favour among the men. Yet, as Richard Evans observes, "the very employers whose spokesmen so eloquently deliniated the consequences of female employment on family life, were at the same time engaged in the wholesale employment of women and children, often at starvation rates . . ."

The working class family certainly could not survive on the man's wage alone. In a perceptive essay, Heilwig Schomerus shows that the idea that men were actually paid a 'family wage' sufficient to keep their wife and kids was a myth. Engineering workers' wages reached a peak when they were 25-27, a couple of years before they usually married, and began to fall dramatically when they were 40-45 – long before their children were old enough to work. The result was usually appalling poverty, which could only be relieved if the wife was able to get paid employment. But this was impossible most of the time because of the impact of repeated pregnancies and continual child care in an era when safe and reliable contraception was virtually unknown. And even when married women did get work, as Robyn Dacey tells in a study of textile workers in Hamburg and Berlin, employers exploited their double burden to force them to accept unstable and appallingly paid jobs, often done from their own homes.

Antidote

In a final, disappointing essay, Richard Evans discusses the attitude of the German socialist movement to the family. He suggests that although initially people like August Bebel and Clara Zetkin accepted Marx's view that capitalism was destroying the family, they later were forced by the realities of German society – and the acceptance of those realities by Social Democrat workers and their wives – to shift their ground. The women who joined the socialist organisations were usually the wives of male members, not women workers, and what began to be preached was not an abolished family but a reformed family.

The implication is that Marx was wrong to argue that the entry of women into production provided the basis for women's liberation and the destruction of the bourgeois family.

But there are two faults in Evans' argument. First, he talks about the attitudes of workers, both male and female, without reference to the industrial struggles they were involved in – and there were in fact very few such struggles in Germany prior to 1914. And secondly, he deals with a period when the number of women in continuous lifetime employment was still relatively small.

The price and the academic style of this book will put it beyond the reach of most *Socialist Review* readers. But some of its material deserves to be popularised as a welcome antidote to prejudices found often enough on the left as well as encouraged by the right.

Chris Harman

Anna Paczuska

Sisters and Workers

Ten Years of the Struggle for Women's Liberation and Socialism

60p (plus 15p postage) from Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

Ditch your prejudices

Belt & Braces and DET Enterprises
Coming Up
by Kate Phelps

Belt and Braces and DET Enterprises, acting as a joint production company, put *Coming Up* on the road for three months in a nationwide tour, ending up at the old Half Moon in Alie Street, East London.

Kate Phelps' play addresses the interplay between sexuality and class, and sexual politics and class politics, in a manner that is rare in that it recognises the often complex reality of actual experience. Frequently, plays dealing with sexuality omit or appear to reject class analysis and class politics, and plays dealing with the state, industrial conflict, and class omit, acknowledge in a token way, or reject the importance of issues arising from sexuality, and consequently, considerable areas of our experience are neglected. To say that 'the personal is political' or even 'the political is personal' doesn't confront this head on necessarily, and, in fact, can be a justification for avoiding doing so, with the result that class politics and sexual politics remain in their own corners, unintegrated. *Coming Up* attempts this integration.

Kevin is a working-class actor from Sheffield, in the rare position of working regularly for a good wage with a prestigious theatre company. He is assertive about his roots when in middle-class company but, ostensibly, is apolitical. He lives with a male lover, Philip, a middle-class playwright, who has 'come out' more than Kevin, is intimidated by Kevin's class hostility, but—he's a socialist. The contradictions and tensions in this situation are very accurately drawn. Kevin's father, an active trade unionist, dies, and having returned to Sheffield, he finds out that his family, father's friends and workmates believe that he was beaten to death by the police after being picked up allegedly for drunkeness.

The similarity with the Jimmy Kelly case is clear, and they begin a public campaign. However, it is made quite clear to Kevin by the main organiser, an old TGWU friend of the father, that his gayness is an embarrassment and must be hidden. Both Kevin and Philip are intimidated by this, and Philip also vacillates and doubts whether the campaign is based on hard facts, but the strength of Kevin's class feelings and pull of his family background, despite the past conflicts with his parents over his gayness, make him stay to take part in the fight—with the possible consequences of losing his place in the theatre company and endangering his relationship with Philip.

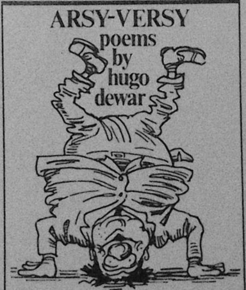
Before becoming an actor, successful, and a lover—and despite being happy in those roles—Kevin makes the choice to put loyalty to his class and community first. However, as is made clear in the final scene, where the campaign committee confront unsympathetic journalists at a press conference, he refuses to hide his gayness and in an angry tirade, points to the links between the oppression of people for their sexuality and the general capitalist attack on the working-class as a whole. In being confronted directly by state violence and attacks on his sexuality, Kevin both comes out as a gay and comes up as a fighter on behalf of his class.

Sometimes the play takes too long to establish points, and Kate Phelps appears to use a conflict or piece of polemic as a device to lurch the action forward, produce a theatrical effect, and make political points, in a manner that makes characters behave unbelieveably. Most notably, Kevin, who has been presented as determinedly uninterested in politics, at the end develops suddenly a clear and well-articulated political understanding of the crisis. At the end of Act 2, Phelps sets up a conflict between class and sexuality that rings false through having the T&G friend of the father insult Kevin and Philip in a way that is surprising in its aggression and insensitivity, given the tragic situation. In what, by and large, is a play with a keen sense of reality, such contrivances undermine that reality and, therefore, undermine the strength of the politics which have been emerging clearly through the action.

However, despite that, *Coming Up* is the most thorough and positive play I've seen dealing with class/sex issues, because it makes quite clear that prejudices must be ditched—you can't fight the class war and avoid fighting sexual oppression, and you can't fight sexual oppression without fighting the class war.

The play was also directed by Kate Phelps, and contained excellent performances from Drew Griffiths, John Grantham, Jane Cox, Lynne Verrall, and Peter Attard.

Derek Newark



£1 plus 20p postage. 5 copies £5, post free.
From: Socialists Unlimited, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

FILMS

Read the book

Tess
Directed by Roman Polanski

Polanski's films—from the satanic nastiness of *Rosemary's Baby* to the sordid corruption of *Chinatown*—have always moved in worlds of darkness, erupting from time to time into scenes of extreme and bloody violence. It might seem quite appropriate therefore that he has chosen to make a film based on one of Thomas Hardy's novels, peopled as they are with suffering men and women whose lives seem governed in the main by ugly twists of fate. The bewitched landscape of *Macbeth* might easily have become Hardy's Wessex, with every local superstition and every pagan secret echoing out of Stonehenge played for all its worth.

But living in exile in France with a prison sentence hanging over his head, Polanski has opted for a different kind of film altogether. In *Tess* he has sought 'respectability'; he has sought to make a film which middle class ladies will happily drag their daughters off to see in the hope of securing a better A-level pass. And Hollywood has responded accordingly by handing out three Academy Awards.

Columbia Pictures are obviously delighted with the product and are marketing it with appropriate subtlety and flair. 'In the tradition of the great motion pictures', roars the trailer, '*Dr Zhivago, Gone with the Wind, Lawrence of Arabia*...' Thankfully they leave out the *Sound of Music*. In actual fact the film doesn't fit wtih these others at all; it is extremely restrained. But the net result is empty, flat and two dimensional.

Polanski has tried for a literal translation of Hardy's powerful imagery, but it simply won't work any more. Consumer capitalism has bought up images of natural beauty and fed them back to us as clichéd adjuncts to breakfast cereal, shampoo and toilet paper for too long. He has trimmed and trimmed Hardy's original text in order to have the beautiful Nastassia Kinski who plays Tess on screen nearly all of the time. As a result the minor characters no longer give voice and life to the social conventions and morality that Hardy is at pains to expose as cruel and destructive.

And that after all is the real interest of the novel: Hardy's dim perception of women's oppression as a social phenomenon. The problem is that he gets so far and no further. Although his sympathies lie with ordinary working people, he never quite manages to locate the oppression he recognises and attacks in the structure of class society. In the end his pessimism gets the better of him and he resorts to quoting Shakespeare: 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport'.

But never mind. My feeling is forget the film and go out and get a copy of the book. It's well worth the read.

Jane Ure Smith

X Y & Z will be written on the street barricades

Those 'street barricades' are part of our mythology. A common judgement on a leftist not ready to join the party is that he or she will be 'on the right side of the barricades'. They are, in fact, the historical symbol of revolutionary socialism: the hard necessity for armed insurrection if the working class is to seize power from its exploiters. The first socialist to formulate this idea was the French revolutionary Auguste Blanqui in the 1830s. It was he who formulated the first rules of insurrection and prepared the first organised insurrectionary movement. For his efforts he was to spend more than 33 of his 76 years incarcerated in thirty different prisons.

The barricades for Blanqui were not mystical: they were the very practical response to the need to organise the military aspect of an insurrection. In May 1839, his 'Society of the Seasons' launched a failed insurrection in Paris. Blanqui planned the military aspect with precise detail. In the narrow streets of old Paris barricades provided an excellent means of defence against regular troops. They proved a realiable weapon later in 1848, when the masses rose to overthrow the tottering monarchy of Louis Phillipe. The ruling class certainly feared them: the counter-revolution of Napoleon III rebuilt the centre of Paris with wide streets to make barricades less of an effective weapon.

But the barricades, of course, were a weapon of struggle appropriate to a certain level of military technique. The development of modern warfare has rendered them less of a central element in armed struggle. The real core of Blanqui's discovery was quite independent of a particular military form. What he recognised was that the seizure of power is a military question. In order for a new class to rule it is essential that it utterly smash the armed apparatus of the old order. The only way to achieve that end is to deploy superior military forces and this entails detailed military preparation: the arming and training of a revolutionary guard capable of fighting the enemy.

A large part of the task of breaking up an army is, of course, political – the subversion of the military hierarchy and the direct appeal to the ordinary soldiers to make common cause with their class brothers and sisters. There are, however, in any army special elite units which it is impossible to win over and which have to be defeated. And even the subversion of ordinary units requires force.

The secret of any army is that it is more dangerous to disobey than to obey. The reason why men 'go over the top' even in slaughters like the Somme in World War One is that there is *some* chance of surviving. To refuse orders in the face of the enemy means *certain* death at the hands of your own military police. The revolution has to convince the mass of soldiers that it is more dangerous to fight against it than to disobey their officers. That means shooting the officers who give the order to fire on workers.

All of this Blanqui saw. He took it seriously, organising to achieve those ends. But his life was one of heroic failure, best summed up by a series of events towards the end of his life.

On October 31 1870, a spontaneous demonstration of workers called on Blanqui to form a new government. He accepted but was powerless to act, and the insurrection collapsed. He went underground, but his organisation was in tatters. His newspaper collapsed from lack of funds. On January 21 1871 members of his party tried again, but Blanqui refused to join them. They failed and Blanqui was forced to leave Paris, to be arrested on 17 March. On 18 March, the masses of Paris rose and established the Commune. Blanqui, a prisoner of the reactionaries, could play no part in that first great experiment in workers' power.

What Blanqui did not recognise was the decisive role of the masses in the revolution. He saw the military aspect of insurrection, but had no real grasp of its vital political dimension. In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky made the following judgement on Blanqui:

> "Insurrection is an art, and like all arts it has its laws. The rules of Blanqui were the demands of a military revolutionary realism. Blanqui's mistake lay not in his direct but his inverse theorem. From the fact that tactical weakness condemns a revolution to defeat, Blanqui inferred that an observance of the rules of insurrectionary tactics would itself guarantee the victory. An active minority of the proletariat, no matter how well organised, cannot seize power regardless of the general conditions of the country.
>
> 'In this point history has condemned Blanquism. But only in this. His affirmative theorem retains all its force. In order to conquer power, the proletariat needs more than a spontaneous insurrection. It needs a suitable organisation, it needs a plan, it needs a conspiracy. Such is the Leninist view of this question.'

An insurrection against the old order is such an enormously difficult task that it can only succeed in the right circumstances. In Lenin's classic definition, the old order must be incapable of continuing to rule, the masses must demand a new order, and there must be a conscious revolutionary party capable of leading the masses. Such fortunate conjunctures occur but rarely in history. But they do occur.

It is the task of the revolutionary party to prepare for those moments. For success it is necessary to have the deepest implantation in the life of the masses. It is necessary that the masses have learnt from long experience to trust the party in struggle. It is necessary that the idea of socialism have permeated the minds of the masses. It is necessary that the masses themselves are prepared to fight for their own liberation. But it is still, even then, necessary for the insurrection to be organised as a technical operation.

It is for this last reason that we have to keep on defending those 'barricades' and to learn the lessons from Blanqui. Against his reformist detractors, he grasped a great truth and a revolutionary truth. It is not the only lesson of revolutionary politics, but it is an important one. Those who attack 'Blanquism', 'putschism' and 'insurrectionism' are not pointing to a better road for socialism. They attack the weaknesses and vices of a great revolutionary in order to justify their own refusal to think through the problems of how the working class can come to power. Their road is a road to failure and defeat.

Colin Sparks

ESSAYS ON THE MATERIALIST CON

SCOTTISH LABOUR HISTORY REVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE SCOTTISH LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY No.2 AUTUMN/WINTER 1988 75p

LABOUR ON FILM - TOLPUDDLE, LUDDITES, GRAMSCI

■

BELLAHOUSTON HOSPITAL SCANDAL

■

HARRY McSHANE REMEMBERED

■

JOHN WHEATLEY

■

SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY 1888

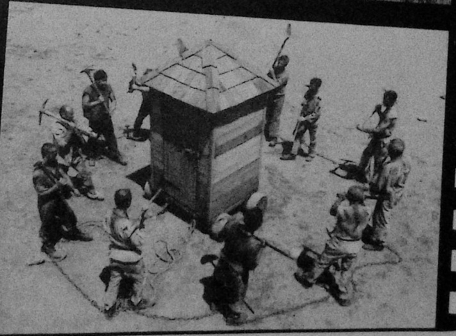
■

MUSEUMS AND LABOUR HISTORY

■

LABOUR HISTORY NEWS AND REVIEWS

COMRADES



CONTENTS

Scottish Labour History Society 2
Editorial 3
Labour History News 4
Museum News 5
Labour Leaders – John Wheatley 6
The Bellahouston Hospital Scandal of 1921 8
'Comrades': Tolpuddle 1834 10
Media Section: Labour Films on Four 12
Book Reviews 15
Labour History News 16
Key Dates in Labour History: 1888 18
Harry McShane 19

FOR information on films and videos in Media Section:

Contacts:

- *The Killing Floor* is available on 16mm, price £55, from BFI Film & Video Library, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (01-255 1444).
- Pelicula Films, 7 Queen Margaret Road, Glasgow G20 9DP (041-945 3333).
- *The People's Flag* is available on VHS video from Platform Films, 13 Tankerton House, Tankerton Street, London WC1H 8HP (01-278 8394).
- *The Luddites* pack is available free from Paul Gerhardt, Network Education Officer, 2nd Floor, Thames TV, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL.

Illustrations courtesy of:

Curzon Films/Zakiya & Associates/David Appleby (cover, p.11)
John Gorman (p. 4)
People's Palace (p. 5, 6, 7)
1820 Society/Sandy Houston (p. 11)
Thames TV (p. 14)
Pelicula Films/Ken Mellin (p. 12, 13)
Glasgow Film & Video Workshop (p. 3)
Dundee District Ar[illegible] (back cover)

ISSN No. 0952-96[illegible]

You are invited to join... The Scotti[illegible] Labour History Society

THE AIM of the Society is to promote the study, discussion and publication of Labour history – that is, the history of Scottish, British and international labour and working-class movements. Since our formation in 1961, we have done this through:

- conferences
- publications
- exhibitions
- projects

Conferences

We hold at least two conferences each year – in Glasgow in March, and in Edinburgh in October. These day-events are open to Society members, delegates of affiliated organisations and the general public. Recent conferences have included speakers from the academic and trade union world on:

- Scotland and the Russian Revolution
- Chartism to Independent Labour 1838-88
- Radical Scotland 1787-1837
- The Spanish Civil War 1936-39
- Unemployed Struggles: Past and Present
- Changing Life and Labour in Scotland 1760-1820
- White Collar Unionism
- Film, TV and Labour

Publications

Our *Journal* and *Review*, with their mixture of academic and popular articles, are published annually and sent free to members. Books on labour history edited for the Society by Secretary Ian MacDougall include:

- A Catalogue of Some Labour Records in Scotland (1978)

Exhibitions

A permanent display of Scottish labour history is housed in Dalkeith Local History Museum, and we have helped organise temporary exhibitions in the past on subjects such as:

- Trade Union Banners
- 1926 General Strike
- 'Tremble Ye Tyrants!': 200 Years of Organised Labour in Scotland (1986)

Projects

We have initiated a number of special projects over the years to preserve and promote labour history:

- Archive records – preserving documents and relics of the working-class movement
- Oral history – recording the memories of veteran activists
- Audio-visual history – promoting the making of film and TV programmes
- Memorials – commemorating labour history personalities
- Slides – collecting coloured slides of trade union banners

MEMBERSHIP

We are an independent organisation, but have always enjoyed strong practical, moral and financial support from the broad trade union, labour and co-operative movement. We hope to strengthen these links, and we welcome new members and affiliates who can help us to:

- form and run regional labour history groups and workshops
- expand our range of contacts with sympathetic organisations (museums, societies, labour movement bodies etc)
- promote labour history in the educational field
- expand the publishing, film and video, oral history activities of the Society
- run a Society stall at labour movement events

EDITORIAL

WELCOME to *Scottish Labour History Review* No. 2. Last year's first issue proved to be more successful than we could have imagined, thanks to your support. After we had distributed a copy free to each member of the Society, the remaining 300 or so copies sold out within a few weeks (apologies to anyone who was unable to get hold of a copy). We are printing more copies of No. 2 in the hope that this increased number will meet the demand.

Our aims in No. 2 remain the same – to bring together a wide variety of articles on labour and working-class history – Scottish, British and international; to promote wider interest in this hitherto 'lost' history – history 'from below'. As you will see from this issue, labour history is more than just the 'official' history of trade unions, Labour Party and Co-operative movements. It covers the 'unofficial', informal networks and movements of working-class history at its broadest – women's history, the history of industrial work, the history of campaining and pressure groups etc.

If you subscribe to these aims, and are not a member of the Scottish Labour History Society, why not join the Society now? The subscription is £5 waged (£2 unwaged) for which you receive – free each year – this *Review* and the Society's widely respected and authoritative *Journal*, gathering together the latest academic research on Scottish and international labour history. You will also be sent information on the Society's two annual conferences in Glasgow and Edinburgh on themes from labour history, as well as news of local Labour History Workshops such as Glasgow's.

To contribute articles to the Society's *Review* and *Journal* you don't need to be a member (but it helps!). We welcome contributions from anyone interested in the promotion of labour history; so if you have any article or piece of news (long or short; academic or popular) send it in for consideration for publication to:

SLHR Editorial Collective
c/o Rob Duncan
Workers Educational Association
212 Bath Street
Glasgow G2 4HW.

SLHS cont'd

Join us by sending annual subscription of £5 (OAP, student, unemployed £2) to:
Dr J. H. Treble,
Treasurer,
Scottish Labour History Society,
Department of History,
University of Strathclyde,
Glasgow G1 1XQ.

(Members are urged to pay by Banker's Order and to inform the Treasurer of any change of address).

LATEST LABOUR NEWS

THE Scottish Communist Party Library, formerly run from the Star Club, Glasgow by Audrey Canning, has found a new location and name. The invaluable collection of labour movement books and pamphlets is now located in the basement of the STUC, 16 Woodlands Terrace, Glasgow, where it has reverted to its original 1968 name, the Gallacher Memorial Library. An article about the collection will appear in the new 'Review'. In the meantime, Audrey will be pleased to help researchers on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12.30 to 4pm.

* * *

AS this edition of the Review was being prepared, we were saddened to hear of the death of veteran Clydeside labour activist Harry McShane. Our tribute to Harry, from one of his younger comrades in the movement, Hugh Savage, is on page 19.

* * *

THE next Scottish Labour History Society Conference takes place at the City Chambers, Edinburgh on Saturday 29th October 1988, from 10.30 to 3.30. The theme is 'Labour, Home Rule and Scottish Nationhood'.

Speakers include Stephen Maxwell, Jim Sillars, Tom Gallagher, Bob Purdie, Christopher Harvie, Michael McGahey (chair).

'SELLING' LABOUR HISTORY

THE Society has been indulging in a bit of self-promotion in recent months as the latest membership drive has got under way. Appeals for affiliation have been circulated to labour movement and other sympathetic organisations, and individual members have been recruited at conferences and labour movement meetings. The Society now runs a stall at the May Day event at Glasgow Green, with its new pin-board display of labour history material on show and a number of publications for sale.

The Society is looking for help in developing these activities :

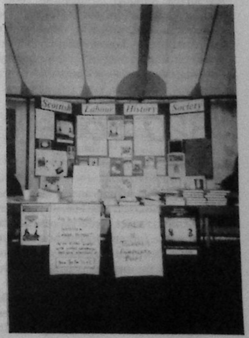
Do you have any old labour history material, pamphlets, books, publications which you could donate to the Society for it to sell at its stalls?

Do you publish labour history books and material which the Society could display on its stall on a sale or return basis?

Do you have time to help the Society expand its promotional activities, especially helping to run stalls at other labour movement events?

If so – let us know!

This year especially, there is a bonus offer from the Society – the People's Palace tea-towels celebrating the centenary of the Scottish Labour Party of 1888 are available from the Society at £1.95 (+ 20p p & p). All enquiries about the tea-towels and offers of help with the Society stall to : Arthur McIvor, Asst. Treasurer, Scottish Labour History Society, Dept. of History, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow G1 1XQ.



- **Society stall at Glasgow May Day, 1988.**

LABOUR HISTORY NEWS

Dundee Conference

THE Dundee Branch of the Scottish Labour History Society enjoyed a relaxed inauguration at a day of discussion on the theme of "Dundee from craft to technology". This was held in the Geography staff room of Dundee University on Saturday 13th June 1987, and the informal atmosphere led to a fertile and continuous exchange of views in the course of the day.

Dr Annette Smith of the Department of History of Dundee University started the morning session with a review of her work on the "Three United Trades of Dundee" - the three building trades of Masons, Wrights and Slaters. She has since published some of these findings in one of the Abertay Historical Society series*

Dr Eleanor Gordon of the Department of Economic History, Glasgow University, then discussed "Women, Work and Collective Action in Dundee 1870-1906", and investigated some interesting examples of pressure organised by women workers on their employers before the continuous organisation of labour had been considered to commence.

In a typically thought-provoking paper, Dr William Walker, author of "Juteopolis", looked at statistics of infant suffocation in late Victorian and Edwardian Dundee and attitudes towards the problem. Ron Allen of the Dundee Oral History Project then played excerpts from tape interviews collected by fieldworkers, and distributed examples of the transcription into Dundee dialect that had identified this Project as being a model in preparation and arrangement.

At the time of going to press the Dundee Branch is planning to hold another informal discussion day on Saturday 28th May. It is intended to make the theme "Dundee through word, song and image", taking the themes of oral history, folk lore and film archive as sources of labour history. Details of the Branch activities available from Iain Flett, Archive Centre, 21 City Square, Dundee DD1 3BY (Dundee 23141 ext 4494).

*Dr Annette Smith "The Three United Trades of Dundee." £4.00 inc postage from Abertay Historical Society, Publications Secretary, Dundee University Archives, DD1 4HN

Iain Flett

T.U. Poster Project

BRITISH TRADE UNION POSTERS PROJECT
42 Queen Square London WC1 3AJ 01-405 9748

POSTERS represent an important and unexplored source of the visual and archival history of the British trade union movement. From the earliest times posters chart the struggle and growth of the trade union movement. Because of the ephemeral nature of posters, soon discarded after the event or issue has passed, comparatively few survive. Although no significant collection of trade union posters exists, the evidence is that sufficient numbers are extant in libraries, homes and union offices to form an illuminating and graphic history.

Rodney Mace and myself are working on a search and find project to trace, photograph and record as many posters as possible in order to produce a book, mount an exhibition and provide the basis of an archival record or perhaps a permanent collection.

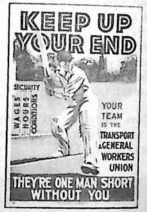
By poster, we mean printed sheets larger than 20" x 15" (508 x 381mm.) although pre-1850's material may be rather smaller. We would like to know of any poster (s) which may be in the possession of readers or of which whereabouts are known. At this stage we do not require the loan of posters, but information concerning location and details of size, wording and illustration. It would also be helpful if your readers have any special knowledge of the design and production of the poster and the date of the purpose for which the poster was made, i.e. recruitment, strike, picket, election, May Day, demonstration meeting, rally etc.

Any help given will of course be given due acknowledgement in the book.

John Gorman

Rodney Mace is a co-founder of London History Workshop Centre. He wrote 'Trafalgar Square - Emblem of Empire' in 1976 and was a contributor to 'Furnishing the World - 150 years of the East End furniture trade', published this year.

John Gorman started work as a poster printer in 1946 and has remained in the industry all his working life. He is the author of three books on the visual history of the labour movement, including 'Banner Bright'.



1820 Society

AS usual the 1820 Society kicked off its marching season with its annual March and Rally in Strathaven on May 14th. In the aftermath of the District elections representatives from the Labour Movement and from the Scottish National Party joined forces to pay tribute to the memory of James Wilson.

Further rallies were being planned as the Review went to press - for Woodside Cemetery, Paisley, in August, and of course for Sighthill Cemetery, Glasgow, in September.

The search for James Wilson's unmarked grave took a dramatic turn last October when the Society - with the assistance of a generous donation from the Aberdeen Branch of A.S.T.M.S. - hired a helicopter for the purpose of taking aerial photographs of Strathaven Cemetery - in which the martyr is buried.

But the photographic evidence which was then acquired did little to advance the process of accurately identifying the location of the grave. Subsequently, the Society's Research Officer, David Jackson - himself a descendant of Wilson's - has been able to produce a Death Certificate for Wilson's widow, indicating that she too is buried in the Cemetery; and the Society is hopeful that this will finally persuade East Kilbride District Council to mark the spot with a plaque.

On the educational front the Society's new Vice-Chairman, Alan Clayton, has been busy lobbying the Scottish Examination Board with the aim of persuading it to incorporate the 1820 Rising into its syllabi both at "H"-Grade and at the new Standard Grade Level.

The Society has also decided to acquire a new Banner as our old one is somewhat frayed. At our future rallies it will hopefully provide a more fitting visual tribute to the memory of Baird, Hardie and Wilson.

I. Bayne,
Secretary,
1820 SOCIETY

MUSEUM NEWS

THERE is always something to interest the labour historian in Scotland's museums, and sometimes in unexpected places. The Lossiemouth Fisheries and Community Musem in Pitgaveny Street, Lossiemouth has for example an interesting display of the personalia of one of the town's famous sons, Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald (1866-1937). Open during the summer months, the fishing industry is its main theme.

Whilst the opening of 'The People's Story' in Edinburgh has been delayed until early 1989 due to financial constraints, work behind the scenes has been progressing. Money granted by S.O.G.A.T.T. and T.A.S.S., matched by grants from the Scottish Museums Council, is enabling the conservation of some of the historic banners. The museum has been gifted four banners of the Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild (Edinburgh branches) and several Friendly Society banners.

'The People's Story' appeal leaflet has solicited a large number of items including printing and bookbinders union cards, rates of pay, tools and photographs, material from the Coopers Union and photographs and material relating to the Suffragette Movement and the Socialist Sunday Schools.

Dundee Museums have also been hard at work on banner conservation, and the Lochee Weavers Banner (*c.*1820) and the Dundee and District Mill and Factory Operatives banner have recently received treatment. Recent acquisitions include the Post Office Engineering Union (now the Telecommunications Union) banner, the Scottish Painters Society banner of the 1930's, badges from the Operative Bakers Union, Dundee and District Jute and Flax Workers and the Flax and Kindred Textile Operatives, together with framed photographs of the latter.

The People's Palace in Glasgow has also made a number of important banner acquisitions, including an 1832 Reform Bill banner, a silk-printed Chartist banner associated with the family of James Baird, the martyr of 1820, the banner of the Grain Millers of Glasgow 1884, the Glasgow Women's Peace banner 1978, Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild banners and the banner of the Bridgeton Socialist Sunday School, 1898. The Scottish Labour Party Exhibition, concentrating on the period 1898-1908 brought a great number of donations in relation to the Socialist Sunday Schools, the Clarion Movement and the I.L.P.

The new community museum in Springburn made up for lost collecting opportunities by creating its own banner. A community sewing and knitting group, Nu Look, under the guidance of banner artist Clare Higney produced a beautiful banner which reflects aspects of Springburn, past, present and future, and which is a valuable addition to the museum collections.

Meanwhile, in Coatbridge, the new Government-financed Enterprise Culture in the form of the Summerlee Heritage Park goes from strength to strength. A visitor to Scotland in 1910 who described Glasgow as "the second last word of Capitalism" was adamant that:

"To see the absolute last, you must go to Coatbridge, where it is written in the clouds of smoke and dust, which do not overwhelm that town, as similar clouds overwhelmed Pompeii and Herculaneum, simply because it is used to them."

It seems that the last word in Capitalism will now be matched with the last word in industrial museums. The growth of Summerlee is an interesting political phenomenon, and one worth watching.

Elspeth King
20 May 1988

(An article by Elspeth King on the People's Palace labour history mural by Ken Currie will appear in the next edition of the *Review.*

The artist and mural, currently receiving local, national and international acclaim, were featured in a BBC2 programme 'New Scottish Art' in May 1988.)

• The Springburn Banner commissioned by Springburn Museum, with the support of Community Education.

Maryhill Local History Project

MARYHILL BURGH HALL
LOCAL HISTORY PROJECT
24 Gairbraid Avenue
Glasgow G20 TEL NO: 041 - 945 2475

MARYHILL Burgh Hall Local History Project was set up in July '87. It is funded by the Unemployed Voluntary Action Fund (Carnegie U.K. Trust Ltd) and is sponsored by the Maryhill Burgh Community Centre Trust.

The team comprises one full-time coordinator and a number of volunteers from the community itself.

The project's remit is to carry out research within the locality with a view to establishing an archive, staging exhibitions and producing a series of publications.

To date, the bulk of our research has been derived from oral sources. Thirty-one tape recorded interviews have been completed and we are in the process of transcribing them.

From these interviews, certain theories have emerged and we are now exploring them further with our interviewees and through documentary research.

We have, at present, only a partial understanding of what Maryhill was. But with the emphasis on oral sources, Maryhill was and is so many things to many people. And it is in the reminiscences of the inhabitants, past and present, that the area comes to life:

Families digging for coal at the Railyards, losing finers and thumbs as their makeshift tunnels caved in.

Delivering oysters in the Maryhill Barracks the day before the Highland Light Infantry left for the Dardanelles.

Sliding on the ice from the overflowing toilets on the stairs of the Redan close.

The bombing of Kilmun Street leaving one hundred and three dead.

Barefooted children running along the towpath on the Forth and Clyde Canal catching farthings from the passengers on 'The Gypsy Queen'.

By getting such glimpses of what life was like for each of our interviewees, a fuller understanding of what Maryhill was like begins to emerge.

In collecting this information, we have spent a lot of time with the elderly in the community. This has been rewarding for us and hopefully for them too. The process of reminiscence for some of the more isolated old folks has certainly had some therapeutic value and we are building on this by setting up reminiscence groups using the Burgh Hall as a centre. We hope that in due course such groups will share their experience and knowledge of the area with the school children from the locality.

Finally, we hope to have a photographic exhibition in the summer of 1988 and for further information or offers of help, please contact us at Maryhill Burgh Hall, 24 Gairbraid Avenue, Glasgow G20 tel. No: 041 - 945 2475.

Euan Girvan, for the Project.

LABOUR LEADERS
JOHN WHEATLEY

THE absence of a biography of John Wheatley continues to be a gap in the literature of the Labour Movement. Historians have shied away from attempting to fill this gap because he left so little in papers or correspondence; also, perhaps, because he was in Parliament for only eight years, compared to Maxton's thirty- four. No cult ever grew around his memory, for he was without the kind of personal magnetism which might have created one, yet his long-term influence may well have been greater than either Maxton or John MacLean.

In the last four years, however, a substantial essay on Wheatley has appeared as part of David Howell's "The Lost Left", and Ian MacLean in "The Legend of Red Clydeside" has reacted fairly strongly to some of the claims still made for his success as Labour Health Minister in 1924.

Based on the lives of Connolly and MacLean as well as Wheatley, David Howell's book is concerned to show us how by the mid-1920's Socialist strategy and debates about the achievement of power had come to focus more or less exclusively upon the British state. Wheatley's career is one in which Dr. Howell feels he shed his Irish nationalism, his faith in decentralised municipal power and his support for Scottish Home Rule, as part of a conversion to a British road to socialism. He argues too that Wheatley reached this political terminus through a rejection of liberal political economy that was similar in some respects to Oswald Mosley's. Mosley, in his ILP days, certainly professed to admire Wheatley, later describing him in his memoirs as the outstanding Clydesider and a man of "Lenin quality." How far Wheatley reciprocated this admiration is not on record but they did travel on parallel routes in so far as J H Hobson's under-consumptionist economic theory was an influence upon them both.

In his 1927 pamphlet "Socialise the National Income" Wheatley anticipated at least in part Mosley's celebrated 1930 memorandum, in as much as he argued that Socialism was unattainable in a context of British capitalist decline and that the state was an instrument with which to regenerate the economy by stimulating working class spending power and managing the movement of prices and wages.

David Howell sees this as an argument for stable managed capitalism as much as a rallying call to Socialists but Wheatley remained an advocate of income and wealth redistribution through taxation, something that had little place either in Mosley's formula for a new Britain or in the programme of the 1929 Labour government.

His faith in the British state, however, was never unconditional, not because he had a theory of the state, which he didn't, but because he was in broad agreement with Labour's policy on the Empire. With Tom Johnston, Wheatley soon after his entry into Parliament was active in the Labour Commonwealth group, and in 1924 and again in 1925 he was among those of his party who went into the division lobbies in favour of Imperial Preference.

In November 1924 he wrote eloquently in "Forward" of the Empire's potential for becoming a "cooperative commonwealth" based on mutual aid, pooled resources, and the preparation for self-government with Dominion status for non-European peoples. Britain's role he clearly conceived of as one based on trusteeship with League of Nations endorsement. "Almost every family here ," he argued, "has a relative or acquaintance in another part of the Empire and this creates a sentiment of tremendous political value. Besides, the Labour movement is growing rapidly in the colonies and a working arrangement among the various Labour parties within the Empire would be a fruitful international."

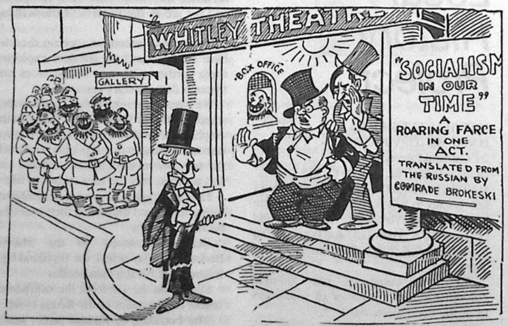
He was to take this argument further, declaring in an interview he gave in June 1925 to the "Sunday Worker" that a Labour government in Britain must treat as one of its priorities joining with Labour in the Dominions to form an economic and fiscal bloc against world capitalism which even the new Soviet state might be persuaded to join.

The practicality of this aspiration received short shrift from the editor of the "New Leader" H N Brailsford. Wheatley, though a frequent contributor to it, never seemed fully to grasp either Brailsford's or J. A. Hobson's cutting edge where the realities of race and economic power were concerned. Neither did he ever attempt to grapple in the way that Maxton did with Lenin's analysis of imperialism. Nonetheless, Wheatley had his moments of insight too, as when in 1927 he conducted a determined campaign against the military intervention in Shanghai sanctioned by the Baldwin government when Chinese nationalist unrest seemed to threaten the lucrative trading concessions which British firms enjoyed in the port. A year later, he was as forceful in exposing the proposed Empire settlement bill which required the unemployed to forfeit part of their benefit in return for agricultural training and assisted passage to an uncertain future in the prairie provinces of Canada.

Wheatley, in other words, envisioned a wider stage for the achievement of Socialism than what the British state offered, and his thinking must not be isolated from the fuller context of Labour's Imperial and Commonwealth policies in the 1920's. By then, Wheatley had redefined, within an Imperial context, the internationalism which David Howell suggests he had abandoned. In one way, of course he had, though belief in a Socialist and fraternal Commonwealth was to be a tenacious influence upon British Labour thinking until well beyond the life-time of the 1945-51 government.

The major area of controversy over the quality of Wheatley's achievement of course continues to centre upon his ministerial role in the 1924 Labour government. Dr MacLean in his treatment of what he calls the "legend" of the Red Clyde seems to want it both ways where Wheatley is concerned. He describes him at one point as "the greatest of the Clydesiders" but this comes at the end of a chapter in which he

...cont'd



• Cartoon courtesy of People's Palace.

WHEATLEY cont'd

seems concerned to minimize his work as Health Minister. He questions, for example, the originality of the 1924 Housing Act and seems to see Wheatley as essentially a fairly compliant civil servant's minister.

The case, however, for treating the 1924 Act as little more than a mere development of existing legislation needs more proof than is offered. Professor Butt showed, after all, and some years ago, that where Glasgow working class need was concerned, Wheatley's Act was easily the most important piece of inter-war housing legislation. Forty two percent of all homes in the city built in that period with government funding were built under the 1924 Act. This, it should be recalled, was despite the fact that subsidies payable under Wheatley's Act were sharply reduced by Chamberlain in 1928 and repealed by the National Government, while the crucial Building Materials Bill, the indispensable companion measure to his Housing Act was lost in 1924 due to the fall of the MacDonald government. This denied to Wheatley and his successors what would have been a powerful instrument with which to control the overall costs of house construction. The Act, of course, had its short-comings and Wheatley didn't even see it as a Socialist measure, but rather as necessary "red cross work" in the class war. With public sector housing now under commercial and ideological attack as never before, this is hardly the best time at which we should seek to dismantle the reputation of a man who never forgot what rack-renting and overcrowding had done to the community in which he grew up.

In office in 1924, Wheatley couldn't escape the reality that he represented a minority view within a minority government and was aware of his own defects. He failed, for example, to secure legislation which would have protected the unemployed from eviction, though this was not for lack of trying. His central dilemma was that any serious legislation he attempted in this area was likely to tempt unscrupulous landlords to evict tenants before they became unemployed, and he argued in cabinet that the real need was for grants-in-aid to local authorities which they could call upon to clear the rent arrears of the unemployed. A bill to this end was attempted but defeated because it was not accompanied by the necessary money resolution which the Commons were required to vote upon. Wheatley managed to turn this reverse into a debating victory in the Commons for himself and the Government in a way which enraged his opponents and still seems to perplex historians.

Wheatley revealed similar skills against the opposition to his handling of the celebrated case of the Poplar Poor Law Guardians. Noreen Branson's account of this is the best we are likely to have for some time to come, and she assesses Wheatley's role more generously than Dr. McLean. On the most urgent issue of the 1921 Mond Order which set statutory limits to what local Guardians could spend on unemployment relief, he was quite clear on the justice of rescinding it. George Lansbury and the Poplar Guardians had of course served prison sentences for their defiance of this order, and Wheatley has been criticized for avoiding any apparent endorsement of their action. Dr MacLean argues that he was either hypocritical or playing an elaborate double game to secure his own position in the Cabinet against opponents like Snowden.

In Parliament he ran rings around his critics in a forensic tour de force that earned their grudging respect, showing that the Mond Order had become unworkable and had in any case been departed from by his predecessors in office though arguing that unless rescinded it would remain a potentially tyrannical threat to elected local bodies where Labour was in control.

Poplar didn't seem to have doubts over his handling of their case, for he received a hero's welcome there after the fall of the 1924 Labour Government. George Lansbury paid his own tribute later. "I ought," he wrote in his memoirs "to put on record the fact that John Wheatley, when he became Minister of Health, by the stroke of a pen wiped out surcharges amounting to thousands of pounds and repealed a ridiculous order by Sir Alfred Mond. In many ways he lightened our task as far as it was possible to do so by administrative act."

In political terms, Wheatley over Poplar is best understood as carrying out an exercize in damage limitation with a degree of skill that secured his own and his government's position in a situation where they had not power to change the Poor Law. He did this moreover in a way that enhanced his own reputation without abandoning the localism which was still an important element within his conception of democracy.

Another charge made by Dr. MacLean is that Wheatley was party to an attempt while a Minister to restrict Poor Law benefit to the families only of workers taking strike action. This, he claims, " was an initiative too right-wing even for the 1924 Labour Government to accept." The question of Poor Law benefits payable during strikes was not of course a new one, and relief under it to a striker's family was possible as the law stood. Actual payments by Boards of Guardians to strikers would expose them to obvious attack from the courts, and the document which Wheatley submitted to the Cabinet simply set out the situation as it was and would remain pending a reform of existing law.

Dr Maclean's reservations about Wheatley's performance as a minister are of course only part of a major re-assessment of a whole period in Scottish Labour and working class history, and like David Howell's, it will prompt debate and clarification of important issues for some time to come. Another, perhaps unlikely source of new information on Wheatley is Dr Christopher Andrew's book on the British Secret Service. He shows us that in 1924 Wheatley agreed to serve on a five-man Cabinet committee on industrial unrest and the real or imagined influence upon it of the Communist party. It came up with little hard evidence to satisfy MI5 and the Special Branch, though the extent of its coopera-

...cont'd

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

Booking-office Clerk (to Paterfamilias). "FREE PASSES TO GLASGOW? WITH PLEASURE. SINGLE OR RETURN? (*Aside*) SINGLE, I HOPE."
[From left to right: MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD, MR. WHEATLEY, MR. NEIL MCLEAN, MR. HARDIE, MR. MAXTON, MR. STEPHEN, MR. BUCHANAN.]

• Cartoon courtesy of People's Palace.

WHEATLEY cont'd

tion with them prompts Dr Andrews to write that "it marked a turning-point in Labour's relationship with the intelligence services." If so, Wheatley didn't let it get in the way of a relationship with Willie Gallacher that went back ten years at least. Though Gallacher as a known Communist militant was almost certainly under surveillance by the intelligence services, his regular meetings with Wheatley while he was still a minister, as his memoirs and John Scanlon's account make clear, continued in a happy disregard of the supposed concern with subversion in the Cabinet of which Wheatley was a member.

During the short life of the 1924 government Wheatley never deceived himself about what it could achieve and his subsequent determination not to join another minority administration is proof of that. Even a clear Labour majority in Parliament would not, however, have cleared the way for birth-control advice to be provided by public health bodies under his ministerial jurisdiction. This was the one instance where Wheatley in office acted recognisably as the Catholic that he was. It is difficult to think of any other Catholic Health minister in the 1920's who would have responded differently, and Wheatley's humane and radical social Catholicism, as I have argued elsewhere, had always been integral to his political credo.

The year 1924 taught him the difference between merely holding office and exercising power. The last five years of his life, despite the severe pressures he found himself under, were characterized by genuine if sometimes confused attempts to learn and then apply the lessons which his ministerial experience had taught him. If he failed in this undertaking, then so too did the Labour movement as a whole, though death was to spare him the traumas of 1931 and the ILP's disaffiliation from Labour a year later.

Ian S Wood
Napier College, Edinburgh

1. O. Mosley, "My Life" (London, 1968) p 174.
2. "New Leader", Nov. 7 1924.
3. I. MacLean, "The Legend of Red Clydeside" (Edinburgh, 1983) p 218.
4. J. Butt "Working Class Housing in Glasgow 1900-1939" - see "Essays in Scottish Labour History" ed. Ian MacDougall (Edinburgh, 1978) p 162.
5. N. Branson, "Poplarism 1919-1925" (London, 1928) p167.
6. G. Lansbury, "My Life" (London, 1928) p 167.
7. C. Andrew, "Secret Service: the Making of the British Intelligence Community" (London, 1985) p. 301.

The Bellahouston Hospital Scandal of 1921

IN 1921 a bitter controversy arose in Glasgow, which received national attention, concerning the treatment of disabled ex-servicemen at the Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Bellahouston. The debate began as a result of questions to the Minister of Pensions, in April of that year, by the I.L.P. member for Govan, Neil McLean. The pressure on the coalition government of Lloyd George was such that it was forced to hold a ministerial inquiry to investigate these charges of ill-treatment.

Neil MacLean's charges were threefold: that there was "indignation ... (in) ...Glasgow ... that men were being discharged as fit for work who have not been properly examined"; that 900 outpatients were examined in seven days; and furthermore 210 men were examined in 80 minutes and 190 of them declared as fit for work. Men it seemed were receiving a medical inspection which lasted barely 30 seconds. He also named an ex-soldier, Alexander Fletcher, who had been twice discharged from Bellahouston as fit for work and on both occasions had collapsed within hours.

The years 1919-1921 in Glasgow have always received special attention from historians of the Labour movement. In 1919, concern about the volatile political atmosphere in the city extended even to Buckingham Palace where George V was reported to be in a "funk ,... talking about revolution". By 1921 the situation seemed, if anything, more critical : two million unemployed, the mines to be de-nationalised, the lock-out of the miners on April 1st, the creation of a 75,000-strong volunteer civilian Defence force to face the threat of strike by the triple alliance - which evaporated on "Black Friday", April 5th.

A TASTE OF PARIS

In retrospect MacLean's questions seem to have been part of a concerted campaign, for a day later the first in a series of angry letters appeared in the "Glasgow Herald" from a pillar of the Glasgow Unionist establishment, Sir Charles Clelland. He complained that the local Joint Disablement Committee (of which he was chairman) although nominally in charge of Bellahouston was little more than a rubber stamp. But his most damaging and sensational criticism was that in the week of the threatened strike by the Triple Alliance the Ministry of Pensions ordered the evacuation of 300 beds. Amongst those patients discharged were "cases who had been prepared for immediate operation".

The local press seized on this latest charge. The "Daily Record" was more specific than Clelland: "when the coal crisis came on 300 outdoor patients were dismissed on the plea that the hospital beds might be urgently required. Riots were said to be expected in Glasgow and the beds were for possible casualties". For John MacLean these events were a straightforward warning "the government was preparing to spill plenty of blood and give us a taste of Paris at the end of the Commune in 1871".

The chorus of disapproval soon included the Royal Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons (Glasgow) and the Corporation of the City. More interestingly at the grass roots a key pressure group seems to have been the International Union of Ex-Service Men. Formed in 1919 in Scotland, the Union was dedicated to "organise and educate the ex-soldiers and sailors for the overthrow of Capitalism and Militarism and institute in its place the Industrial Republic". This organisation was apparently closely watched by Special Branch due to its suspected links with the I.R.A. The Union led a deputation to the Corporation of Glasgow to protest about Bellahouston, kept this issue alive in the letter columns of newspapers and held a public meeting at St Andrew's Hall on May 8th where any aggrieved ex-soldier could put his case. They, too, wrote to Lloyd George insisting on an inquiry. One of their key platforms was the Clyde Workers Committee political weekly "The Worker" where they had a regular feature detailing branch meetings, political lobbying, demonstrations and general political advice. In one issue of "The Worker" they warned members against writing detailed letters to the Union as they had proof of letters being opened by the G.P.O. and the contents used at Medical Tribunals. This inexorable pressure on the government led to the appointment on the 26th May of a Committee of Inquiry under the chairmanship of the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland, Lord Dickson. The terms of this inquiry were "to inquire into the management of Bellahouston Hospital ... and espec-

...cont'd

BELLAHOUSTON cont'd

ially the Out-Patient Department".

That the allegations about Bellahouston provoked such a storm of protest requires very little explanation. No issue was more sensitive in Scotland than the treatment of ex-soldiers; it cut across every class and party division. It was not just the proximity of the war or the lack of "homes (or jobs) for heroes" it was above all the inordinate burden the war had put on Scotland. As Christopher Harvie has noted "For the Scots the supreme sacrifice had also been a disproportionate one"; in proportional terms Scotland had lost more men than any other country in the Empire. On top of this, in 1919, the government was dealing with the claims of two million war pensioners and dependants and an average of 400,000 letters a week applying for pensions.

Bellahouston Hospital was built under the auspices of the Scottish Red Cross in 1915 and was paid for by public subscription: a total of £100,000 was raised. The need was for a large military hospital where: "The wounded may receive the best medical treatment at the earliest moment they arrive in the country". Glasgow and particularly Bellahouston Park was chosen for this the largest of the 'front line' military hospitals, due to its many advantages "near a large medical school ... a fine open exposure to sunlight and fresh air and being within easy access of the terminal railway stations so that no time will be lost in transfering men from their ambulance trains to their beds in the wards".

Initially planned as a 700 bed hospital this was later increased in the war to 1200 beds. Men were to be treated by the, then, relatively new orthopaedic techniques. In all, in the period 1915-1919, 14,807 wounded men were received. The hospital and its patients became a familiar part of the Glasgow landscape as Harry McShane observed: "every night trains full of wounded came into Central Station and the ambulances went up to Bellahouston Hospital: we could all hear them. For years after the war men lay in Bellahouston with no arms and legs".

With the ending of the war the hospital was officially handed over to the Ministry of Pensions on 1st December 1919. From that point on Bellahouston dealt with "other ranks", ex-officers were treated in other hospitals like Netley, in Hampshire. The Ministry had now the responsibility of assessing the degree of disability, treating the injuries and awarding pensions. This meant not just a considerable number of patients on the wards but a new feature, outpatients, for which in 1919 the hospital had no provision.

The task of the doctors at Bellahouston was to examine patients and decide if injuries were "attributable" to their war service or merely "aggravated" by their war service or "neither attributable nor aggravated by service". The patient's degree of incapacity also decided whether he was fit for work or not, thus "a patient with a 30% disability would be marked 'fit to work' (i.e. work appropriate to his diminished ability)". In order to stream-line this medical examination the Ministry of Pensions introduced form MRI.

NOT PROVEN

Lord Dickson led a committee, of 4, that could fairly be said to represent the interests of the political establishment. It began its hearings on June6th in Glasgow and immediately met with protests from the International Union who objected to the fact that the hearings were to be held in private and that the committee included a representative of the Ministry of Pensions. Lord Dickson advised them to address their complaints to the Ministry and noted "no other Ex-service Men's Organisations expressed any desire to take part or be represented. Another committee member demanded "What is the International Union of Ex-Servicemen?" Most damaging of all to the critics of Bellahouston was the refusal of Clelland to give evidence to "a private committee ... on a remit so restricted in its terms;;.

The Committee dealt with three broad areas, the condition of the outpatient department especially in February 1921; the discharges in April of the same year; and finally to examine the general administration of the hospital. The International Union produced over 40 witnesses but the committee's attitude to such evidence was hostile: "if we were to accept as well founded the statements as to these complaints there was very little if anything that was right connected with Bellahouston".

As regards the outpatients department the committee traced the history of this department from December 1919 where in an annex of one of the wards in one week nearly a thousand patients attended. During 1920 the figure continued to climb, for example the daily attendance reached a peak of over 600 patients.

By October 1920 the monthly total attending as outpatients was over 11,000 under the supervision of three doctors. A new superintendant was appointed in January 1921 who admitted "the whole system was rotten". He also calculated that the time available for medical consultation was 1 minute. But this the committee interpreted as a loophole: "large numbers are put on treatment allowances who would not be so fortunate if a longer time was available".

It was found in February 1921 that 930 patients were discharged, of whom subsequently 65 were re-admitted to Bellahouston and 57 to other institutions. (This was the set of circumstances that triggered off Neil McLean's questions). The reason why 57 were re-admitted to other hospitals beggars description: "The examinations by the outside doctor and those made by the Hospital Officers were not conducted on the same basis". Ill health was apparently divisible. Just for good measure the Committee added "of course as regards some ailments ... a few days might produce a considerable change in the patient's condition particularly in the case of what are called alcoholic patients".

As to the accusations that 210 men were examined in 80 minutes "we are satisfied they are founded on gross exaggeration".

But as to the crisis surrounding the discharge of 300 patients on April 14th the Inquiry admitted that the Commission for Medical Services telephoned the Medical Superintendant "not only of Bellahouston but of all the larger Ministry of Pensions Institutions asking them to review cases and to send those patients home that could go without detriment to themselves". At no point does Lord Dickson profer a reason as to why 300 beds were needed at Bellahouston.

As to the general complaint of maladministration this, too, was found to be not proven: "we could not conveniently deal at length with all of these complaints within the due limits of this report and there is evidence that all of these complaints were not entirely spontaneous on the part of the patients".

BELLAHOUSTON BUBBLE

The report was published on October 14th 1921 and the "mainstream" Glasgow papers welcomed it as disproving all charges. The editorial judgement of the "Glasgow Citizen" is typical: "Bellahouston Bubble ... in no single case has a charge been proved". The "Glasgow Herald" agreed and as to the discharge of 300 patients in April 1921 reminded it readers that "reasonable people who recall the claims and anxieties of that recent event in our industrial history will not censure the authorities severely even though their action added to the state of friction and tension which existed in the domestic politics of Bellahouston"

But in other, more radical, newspapers the campaign continued unabated. In "Forward" of December 1921 the case of Mr Hart is highlighted. He was discharged as fit to work from Bellahouston and died three weeks later.

It is hard to resist the conclusion that Lord Dickson's Report interpreted the figures in the best possible light, favoured the evidence of the medical staff at Bellahouston, and either ignored or treated with contempt the views of the hospital's critics.

Bellahouston Hospital survived as a hospital until 1930 and in 1938 the site of the hospital became the venue for the Glasgow International Exhibition.

Michael Morris, Bell College, Hamilton

'COMRADES': TOLPUDDLE 1834

Tolpuddle: The Facts

LIKE many legends of the labour movement, the Tolpuddle Martyrs have attained mythical status without too many people knowing the full reasons why they came to be transported for the crime of forming a trade union. Since their story has been so seldom told - Miles Malleson's play " Six Men of Dorset" (1934) is still the major dramatisation - Bill Douglas's film "Comrades" is most welcome. But those looking for hard facts about the 'Dorchester Labourers' (as they were popularly known at the time) will need to turn to traditional written historical sources, such as Joyce Marlow's " Tolpuddle Martyrs" (1971).

The background to the case was of course the rural distress that accompanied the agricultural and industrial revolutions, especially in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. Trade Unions, although illegal under the Combination Acts till 1824/25, had become established in industrial areas by the early 1830's. It was the fear of such working-class collective action spreading to their heartlands that made the country squires, already under threat from the 'Captain Swing' riots of the 1830's, take action.

Spearheading the drive against rural unionism was a network of Establishment figures. At the top was home secretary Lord Melbourne, a traditional Whig who favoured reform as long as it never threatened property rights and privilege. His contacts with family and friends in rural Dorset led to this area becoming a testing ground. Through the mediation of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, the services of a local anti-radical magistrate and squire, James Frampton, were aquired; and a case of rural unionism, out of which to make an example, was sought.

Enter the six men of Dorset, typical agricultural workers of their time, part of the small community of Tolpuddle, working the land of squire Frampton, in harsh conditions for little pay. 10/- a week was the amount set by local magistrates; but as the laws of capitalist political economy gradually eroded their wage-fixing powers, pay was driven down eventually to 6/- in late 1833. Of the six labourers, five made up a fairly tight-knit group, through common ties of family and religion : George Loveless, 37, was a Methodist lay preacher; his brother James, 26, was also a strong Methodist; their brother-in-law Thomas Stanfield was, at 44, the oldest of the group; and his son John, at 21, the youngest; James Brine, also 21, was later to marry into the Stanfield family. The only 'outsider' was James Hammett, 23, later known as 'silent Hammett' for his reticence in reviewing his experiences. Mystery also surrounds his initial arrest as a union member, with speculation that it was a case of mistaken identity (with his collusion) for his brother John who had a wife and child to support.

The Tolpuddle Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers was the organisation formed by the workers to try to better their lot through negotiation. The self-educated George Loveless was aware of union developments elsewhere in Britain through his contacts with Robert Owen's GNCTU. Late in 1833, he began to organise clandestine meetings in attic rooms, and members were initiated into the union through oaths sworn before a semi-religious banner of the grim reaper of death urging mortals to 'Remember Thine End'.

It was this 'secret society' aspect of early trade unionism that was to provide the ammunition for the Establishment's attack. With no Combination Acts to turn to, the Home Office urged local magistrates to look to the 1817 Oaths Act, which classed any society administering a secret oath as unlawful combination. Deeper legal digging produced a similar 1799 Act, and a particularly 'useful' 1797 Act (passed at the time of naval mutinies) which outlawed oaths that bound their participants not to reveal the activities of their society. For the authorities, this latter had the advantage of being punishable by seven years transportation, rather than the three months in prison or £20 fine of the others. Armed with these three acts and the evidence of a Tolpuddle informer Edward Legg, Frampton and his fellow notables posted warnings on Saturday 22nd February 1834, and had the six labourers arrested the next Monday morning.

They were brought before the Spring Assizes in Dorchester on March 17th to face a complex prosecution 'web' woven around them with the oaths Acts. Their main defence was the lack of evidence about an oath being administered, and the fact that the 1797 Act had been aimed at seditious mutineers, not the type of labourers who had formed the Tolpuddle Friendly Society. The claim that "their only crime was conspiracy to protect each other from the evils of possible starvation" failed to impress Judge Baron Williams and the jury of local worthies. The maximum sentence of seven years transportation was passed as "an example and a warning" on March 19th.

Transportation of five out of the six labourers took place swiftly in April, and the sixth, George Loveless ("the ringleader") followed, after an illness, in May. His destination - working on a road gang and government farm in Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) - was seen as a harsher option than the traditional destination of New South Wales. There the others faced fairly conventional fates for transportees - sent 'up river' or inland (after a 300 mile, 2-week walk) to work for farmers or serve local masters.

The government's hurried transportation of the prisoners, in the hope that interest in their case would die down, did not pay off. Already in April a press campaign was underway within the influential radical press. The main campaigner, "The True Sun", printed an article or leader every day, mercilessly pillorying the Establishment and all its elements which involved 'illegal' oath-taking (especially the Masonic and Orange Orders.) A number of petitions for the 'Dorchester Martyrs' (a term first used on April 5th) were presented to Parliament and debated on April 28th. A series of London meetings through March and April were addressed by figures like Robert Owen; the most notable was a 'monster meeting' at Copenhagen Fields on April 21st. Though unable to prevent the sentences being carried out, the campaign achieved permanence as the London-Dorchester Committee, with two main functions - first, to raise public subscrip-

...cont'd

TOLPUDDLE cont'd

tions to support the families in Tolpuddle who were being denied relief by a vindictive Squire Frampton; second, to keep the case before public and Parliament through a series of petitions. A new Home Secretary Lord John Russell was more responsive to public pressure, and a conditional pardon was granted in November 1835, followed by a Royal Free Pardon in March 1836.

Confusion and delay surrounded the transmission of this information to the penal colonies, so that George Loveless was not brought home till the early months of 1837, followed by the others in early 1838. The only exception was James Hammett, not brought home till 1839 due to his extra confinement on assault charges, possibly serving time on the notorious Norfolk Island.

The five Martyrs who were in Britain in 1838 became public personalities with tours, meetings and stage appearances through 1838 and 1839 as the "Victims of Whiggery" (the title of the pamphlet written by George Loveless). Funds from the London-Dorchester Committee were used to buy them all farms in Essex, but dissatisfaction with their life in England led the five close-knit Martyrs to emigrate with their families to Ontario, Canada, between 1844 and 1846. Hammett, ever the outsider, had already returned to Tolpuddle, where he married three times, lived the life of a minor local celebrity, and died in 1891 at the age of 80. The others found the anonimity they desired in Canada, each living to a good old age (all of them over 65, with James Brine, the last survivor, dying in 1902).

The first step to the creation of the myth was taken in 1875 with a memorial presentation to Hammett in Tolpuddle, inspired by the resurgent agricultural union movement of Joseph Arch. In 1912 the trade union movement erected a memorial arch at the village churchyard. The TUC organised major centenary celebrations in 1934, with marches, cultural events and the inauguration of a block of workers' cottages. In 1947 a memorial plaque was unveiled; a museum has been built up. Annual trade union rallies at Tolpuddle culminated in 1984's 150th anniversary celebrations. The Dorchester Labourers had become the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the most recognisable - but at the same time unknown - figures of trade union history; and in the process, so the story goes, the ancient town of Tolpiddle had aquired its new spelling, necessary to preserve the dignity required of the greatest heroes of the British trade union movement.

Douglas Allen

Comrades: The Film

ANY sympathetic cinematic portrayal of a neglected area of labour history is welcome - and doubly so when it comes in such a good film as this. Scots exile writer-director Bill Douglas, who recreated his painful upbringing in the Lothian mining village of Newcraighall in the award-winning "My Childhood" trilogy (1972-78), has moved on to an international scale with this, his first feature film. All the basic documented facts of the Tolpuddle story are there. The first half of the film evocatively recreates the hard life and labour of the Dorset agricultural villages. Methodist chapel worship provides the few moments of relief, its simplicity and humanity contrasted with lavish lifestyle and hypocrisy of the squirearchy and established church. After the arrest and sentencing of the six labourers, the film's second half covers their varying experiences in Australia, and ends with their return to England to public acclaim.

But anyone looking for a straightforward filmic account of the events should look elsewhere. At three hours, the film is a long, slow-paced, unconventional narrative, very much a personal vision of the Martyr's story, seen through the artistic eye of Douglas that was so evident in his trilogy. Words like 'austere', 'minimalist', 'primitive' and 'poetic' are the main terms that come to mind to describe the Douglas style. All the expected visual beauties are there - static scenes of the Dorset countryside, with figures in a landscape; tight close-ups of rustic faces; shimmering Australian exotica. For the villagers, occasional lyrical moments interrupt the monotony of the daily grind, as when a sailor dances a hornpipe into town to provide an hour's escape into another world for the enthralled onlookers. Poetic licence is taken by Douglas to embroider myth out of circumstantial evidence - Hammett's 'mistaken' arrest is seen as a case of noble self-sacrifice by an unworthy brother; a convict chain-gang revolt is turned into a stylised image of revolution; the Martyrs' contact with aborigines comes to symbolise international class solidarity.

One of Douglas's most striking techniques is the minimalist narrative which ' de-dramatises' many of the key moments. We see little of the conspiratorial union in action, or of their arrests and transportation; the trial is briefly experienced from the point of view of the families sitting outside the courtroom; the process of campaigning for the release of the prisoners and issuing pardons is only glanced at briefly. So many times we are shown just the side-effects or after-effects of vital events - partly, admittedly, due to budget constraints, but partly also due to Douglas's aesthetic choices. One of his most imaginative ideas is the overall framing of the story as the account of a travelling lanternist 'everyman' (played by Scots actor Alex Norton), who, in fourteen guises throughout the film, tells parts of the story through a variety of pre-cinematic devices. What could be seen as an annoying mannerism becomes instead a constant Brechtian reminder that history is always mediated through individuals and a variety of devices.

The film, then, may not be to everyone's taste. No audience in a Douglas film is ever spoonfed, and many scenes and sequences are enigmatic, to say the least. Doctrinaire socialists and trade unionists may also be disappointed by Douglas's denial that his film is political in the conventional sense; he sees the story of the Martyrs as an essay on human relationships and a tribute to the human spirit, in a world where "everyone has his reasons".

But it is mainly these distinctive Douglas touches that make the film so memorable. The texture of everyday life and work in Tolpuddle (recreated from the deserted village of Tyneham, in Dorset's Purbeck Hills) is meticulously presented. A convincing description is given of the motivating power of the Methodist religion,rather than trade union collectivism. Most astonishing of all is the impression given of life for some of the transportees in Australia - not exactly a holiday camp, but still a mind-broadening and liberating experience after the cramped confines of rural Dorset. No doubt labour historians could take issue with many aspects of Douglas's film as a piece of history, but as a film "Comrades" is an outstanding achievement.

'COMRADES'

1820 Society

SCOTLAND'S 1820 "COMRADES"
by IAN BAYNE
(SECRETARY, 1820 SOCIETY)

MOST people – including most Scots – have heard of the "TOLPUDDLE MARTYRS", the six Dorset farm-workers sentenced in 1834 to 7 years' transportation due to their involvement in illegal Trade Union activities.

Yet sadly most people – including most Scots – have not heard of Scotland's own 1820 Martyrs, JOHN BAIRD, ANDREW HARDIE and JAMES WILSON – who were actually sentenced to death and subsequently executed as a result of their commitment to political reform and Trade Union rights. In addition the fact that a further 19 Scottish Radicals were sentenced to indefinite transportation to Australia for their participation in the 1820 Rising is not widely known.

It was precisely in order to draw attention to this educational anomaly that the 1820 Society mounted a picket outside the Premier showing of the film, in Glasgow in the spring of last year.

The Society's picket was in no way intended as a protest against the production of a film – at a cost of 2 million pounds – about the undoubted sacrifices made by the "Tolpuddle Martyrs" to advance the interests of the working-class and the Trade Union movement.

We certainly respect their efforts – and their memory. At the same time we feel that our own Scottish 1820 Martyrs – both the 3 who were executed, and the 19 others who were transported – are equally worthy of such commemoration – both in the history books – and hopefully at some future date – in an equally expensive film production.

Our picket was simply an effort to dramatise our demand for such recognition.

• 1820 Society picket at GFT.

MEDIA SECTION

LABOUR FILMS ON FOUR

FOR Labour historians, Channel 4 has proved to be the goldmine we hoped it might be; some of the recent nuggets to be found have included everything from fiction and fiction-based-on-fact to dramatised documentary and documentary.

Fiction came in the form of "The Proud Valley" in February 1988, a rare screening of the 1940 British Paul Robeson film, directed by Pen Tennyson. Robeson was of course the hero of the international left in the 1930's and 1940's and during his self-imposed exile from the USA in late 1930's Britain, he made six films which established his credentials as the noble black working-class hero par excellence. Two of the films have not survived modern criticisms of their racist and imperialist overtones – "Sanders of the River" (1935) and "King Solomon's Mines" (1937). But the other four – made by smaller independents – allowed Robeson to put more of his progressive political stamp on them. In "Song of Freedom"(1936), he played a docker returning to his African roots; in "Jericho" (1937) he was a soldier hero who deserts to rule a North African kingdom; in "Big Fella" (1937) he was an unemployed docker in Marseilles who recovers his self-respect.

His role in "The Proud Valley" sums up the image that had been constructed of him, being written for him by fellow Unity Theatre producer Herbert Marshall. Robeson plays David Goliath, a stoker who leaves the sea to become a miner in a Welsh valley village. The miners welcome him as much for his voice as his muscle-power ("we're all black down there") as they practice for the choral festival. When the mine closes down, Robeson joins their march to London for jobs and as the miners prepare their pit for re-opening to help the war effort, he dies heroically, sacrificing himself for his fellows. Besides its positive picture of racial harmony, the film is packed with fascinating filmic representations of working-class life – choir and chapel; the tally man and the lad o' pairts working his way through mining college; the unemployed digging in the slag-heaps and going on a delegation to London. And the final sequence of Robeson's ghostly voice echoing through the valley with the choir would bring a tear to the eye of the most hard-bitten historian.

"The Killing Floor" (1984, director, Bill Duke) shown in December 1987, is very much fiction based on fact. From the events of the Chicago race riots of 1919, the film-makers have shaped a stunning Upton Sinclair type saga of race and labour relations in the stockyards. The story opens in 1917 with two black workers migrating from the south to seek war work in Chicago. Our hero Frank Custer (Damien Leake) gets a job in the stockyards through the 'Mr. Fixit'; and overcoming the white immigrants' resentment of him, and the black distrust of 'white man's unions', he becomes a union activist. He prospers with the war-time boom and brings his family north; but with the post-war slump and demobilisation, competition for jobs drives a wedge between black and white comrades, and the union is broken. Racial tensions in the city erupt in a summer of violence as the black ghetto is besieged by white mobs. The machinations of the meat-packing employers results in the recruitment of a new non-union black workforce, and Frank finds himself having to chose between his race and his white union collegues. He choses the former and goes into work in the yards again. But potential defeat sows the seeds of future victory as the final sequence shows Frank recruiting his first member for a new unionisation drive (something which is finally achieved, we are reminded in a postscript, in the 1930's.)

The points of interest to labour historians in this well-researched and authenticated film are legion – the problems of ethnic division between black and white, and within

...cont'd

• John Sessions as Gramsci.

LABOUR FILMS cont'd

white immigrant groups (such that union meetings can only take place through the use of multiple simultaneous translations!); the religious fervour that budding unionism inspires, with the rhythmical chanting of the one word 'Union!' creating the necessary ties between all races and tongues; the power of the employers to choose workers at the daily muster and exploit workforce spits on ethnic lines; the power of the shop-floor to answer day-to-day exploitation by collectively stopping work and folding arms until the foreman concedes their point; and the appearance of figures from the historical record such as John Fitzpatrick, 'King' of Chicago labour.

The film is immaculately designed, photographed and acted, with the modern colour footage intercut with black-and-white newsreels from the time. Just as remarkable as the end product is the nature of its production – a Public Forum Production for the 'Made in USA' series (public broadcasting television), with major funding from a number of Humanities Foundations, some bastions of capitalism (Ford & Rockefeller Foundations and Xerox) and four trade unions (Communications Workers, Steelworkers, Food & Commercial Workers and Operating Engineers.) Thanks are also given in the credits to more than 60 trade unions who helped in the production. There has been word for a while that American Unions are moving into promoting their cause through involvement in feature film production; if films like "The Killing Floor" are the end product, it will certainly be a worthwhile move.

Dramatised documentary is the format chosen to portray the life and ideas of Antonio Gramsci in "Gramsci: Everything that concerns people", shown in December 1987. The enterprising idea to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of the current front-runner amongst Marxist theoreticians was taken by Glasgow's Pelicula Films, with Mike Alexander directing a script by Douglas Eadie. Through a variety of techniques, the film tells the story of Gramsci – from his birth in 1891 in Sardinia into the family of an impoverished middle-class government official; his conversion to socialism at University in pre-war Turin; his postwar involvement in the factory occupations and his conversion to communuism with the newspaper 'Ordine Nuovo' in 1919 and the creation of the Italian Communist Party in 1921; his election as communist deputy to parliament in 1924; his subsequent arrest by Mussolini and imprisonment from 1926 to 1937, during which time he wrote and smuggled out his "Prison Notebooks". exploring the now fashionable ideas of hegemony, the national-popular, cultural struggle etc.

Much of the story is carried through conventional techniques of photographs, archive film (including rare footage of Gramsci at the Comintern in Moscow) and commentary from narrator. But this is intercut with contemporary filmed material – interviews with former comrades from Italian prison and communism such as Giovanni Lay, Gustavo Trombetti and Battista Santhia; footage of popular festivals in Sardinia to illustrate the roots of Gramsci's ideas; and dramatised scenes from Gramsci's life in prison to show his character and his developing ideas. In these sequences, the actors' use of regional accents (mostly Scottish) evoke the kind of regional/national questions that underlay much of Gramsci's thinking on culture and politics. Scots exile John Sessions gives a very human portrayal of Gramsci – too human for some it may be said, with its picture of a bitter man often giving vent to frustrations, verging on the nasty, on his visiting family (understandable in the circumstances, but contradicting our image of a 'nice man'?). There isn't enough justice done to the complexity of Gramsci's ideas, but in an hour-and-a-half that would be asking for the impossible; at best the film will leave the audience with a taste for Gramsci and a will to find out more.

The more straightforward documentary, "The People's Flag", broadcast in five parts form October to December 1987 and now available on video, makes interesting comparisons (technically and ideologically) with the Society's "Pioneers of Socialism" (reviewed in "Review" No.1). 'Straightforward' is not the best word to use in connection with this history of the labour movement especially when compared with the conventional chronological structure and 'neutral' stance of 'Pioneers'. 'The People's Flag' takes a controversial theme – the betrayal of the working class bu the jingoistic bureaucratic official labour movement – and argues it out through a complex interacting of past and present. Footage of recent strikes and military conflicts is intercut with old newsreels and photographs; eye-witness testimony on the past from veterans is mixed with opinion from contemporary commentators; the whole thing is anchored by an uncompromising Marxist analysis commentary, delivered in a dry, regional accent by a female narrator. The militant idelological position of the makers (Platform Films, directed by Chris Reeves and written by former TV producer Stuart Hood) will be applauded by some, will infuriate others, but will undoubtedly give food for thought to the majority.

The content of the episodes will be summarised in the next edition of the Review.

"The Sharp End" is the Channel 4 series that replaces "Union World", the programme which for 5 years pioneered the idea of news and views from the trade union perspective. In tune with the times, the remit of "The Sharp End" is to deal with 'broader workplace issues' – looking at trade unions in their wider context in the labour market. New presenter, Scots exile journalist John Lloyd, sees this as natural – he points to changes in the nature of the labour market, and to the decline of trade unions in status and as a political force in the 1980's. He instances also the decline in newspapers of the 'labour correspondent' (a breed which emerged with the wartime emphasis on the key role of industrial workers and trade unions); he or she has now become the 'employment correspondent', writing columns with titles like "Workplace" or "Workforce". It is reported that the TUC did not object too strongly to the ending of "Union World", seeing more positive prospects in getting out of the 'ghetto' into a wider context. We are still assured of a union perspective of sorts behind the programme, since it is produced for Granada by Viewpoint Productions, the company of TV presenter and NUJ activist Vincent Hanna. But there must still be doubts about the loss of a programme which was the sole weekly standard-bearer for labour in the ideological battlefield of the airwaves. Now the field has been virtually abandoned to the likes of "The Business Programme", "Business Daily", "Money Spinner" and the quizshow entertainment of "The Stocks and Shares Show".

Lagging behind Channel 4 in their presentation of programmes of interest to labour historians are the other channels. But each has produced through the year at least one programme of note:

BBC Scotland's 'Play on One' "The Dunroamin' Rising" (February 1988) would have struck a chord with many. Old Red Clydeside marxist revolutionary Ian Sinclair (Russell Hunter) is taken into a church eventide home; haunted by dreams of his rabble-rousing days, especially the pitched battle with police in George Square in 1919, he sets about regenerating the deadening atmosphere of the home, eventually leading the residents in a hunger strike

...cont'd

• Pelicula Films shooting Gramsci in Blackcat Studios.

LABOUR FILMS cont'd

against the threat of staff redundancies. Familiar? Thankfully many reviewers made the Harry McShane connection, but there was precious little mention in most of the BBC's pre-publicity that this was 'art imitating life'. Author Colin McDonald, a former BBC producer, admits that he got the idea only after hearing by chance that there was a marxist in Baxter House. The nagging feeling must remain that Harry McShane was being appropriated for other purposes - a view that was expressed in at least one letter to the "Glasgow Herald" which suggested that the author should acknowledge more clearly his sources "instead of plagiarising people's real life events for personal gain and glory."

BBC2's "Timewatch" continues to offer consistently interesting tours down some of the less explored by-ways of history. Editions over 1987 and 1988 offered labour themes on two occasions - an exploration of the origions of the Zinoviev Letter which wrecked Labour's chances in the 1924 election; and an anniversary account of the Russian Revolution, as seen through film.This latter exercise proved two things. Firstly that any piece of film can be used in any way to serve any purpose the film-maker wants - shots of Russian troops sitting in the snow had been used to illustrate everything from "the fine fighting troops of the Tsar" to "the dejection and misery which turned to revolution". Secondly that most of the footage we associate with the Revolution is in fact feature film footage of events later recreated by Eisenstein for his films such as "Strike" and "October" (cameras couldn't film at night so of course there is not footage of the storming of the Winter Palace, an event which wasn't even really as dramatic as the mythological mass charge staged by Eisenstein.) Those with an interest in Soviet cinema should watch out for screenings on TV and in film theatres of some of these Eisenstein classics, on the 90th anniversary of his birth in 1898. The Scottish Labour History Society screened "Battleship Potemkin" at the October 1987 conference on the Russian Revolution, and proved that there was still life in the great old films. A survey of Eisensteins's films will appear in a future issue of the "Review".

• 'The Luddites'.

ITV's "The Luddites" (April 1988) was an excellent programme, one which will surely become a model for future labour history film-making. Its use of current affairs style drama-documentary techniques to recreate and investigate past events is not new - Peter Watkins pioneered this in the 1960's with works like "Culloden" - but seldom has it been done better than in this 60-minute film.

A prowling, shaky, hand-held camera follows the West Yorkshire wool croppers of 1812 as they plan and carry out their machine-breaking activities. It observes the wool manufacturers, who are bringing the cropping machines into their mills, as they plot their counter-attacks with local magistrates. An unseen interviewer elicits the opinions of the participants throughout - the workers lament the indignity of 'aristocrats of labour' having their ancient craft replaced by human machinery in exploitative factories; their families describe the rigours of surviving on poor relief; the manufacturers argue for the profit and efficiency that mass production and new technology brings; 'experts' like David Ricardo outline the benefits of free enterprise capitalism and the impossiblity of standing in the way of progress; and Home Secretary Sidmouth expounds on the need for law and order.

Certain scenes are stunningly well done. The observation of the meal-time ritual of an unemployed family. and the interviews with them (largely improvised) ring chillingly true to contemporary TV scenes; as does the mixture of denial and justification with which the Luddites greet the murder of the hardest local manufacturer Horsfall (for which three of them will eventually hang).

The obvious points of reference to today's events are expertly made, without going overboard - dislocations of new technology; the workers' pleas for its humane and controlled introduction, with benefits shared; the ruthless power of market forces; the inadequacies of the poor relief welfare system; the desperation of workers denied legal trade union outlets for their grievances; the bitter comments on the society divided into extremes of wealth and poverty.

Only occasionally does the film go too far. Use of terms like 'restrictive practices' and 'getting round the table' certainly make the link between past and present, but sound just that bit strained in the minutely recreated world of frock-coats and early industrialisation. And the idea of participants putting their hands over the camera to emphasise the 'you are there!' is a rather unnecessary gimmick.

All in all though, "The Luddites" is a marvellous evocation of a neglected period of struggle from years gone by, technically immaculate in terms of location, costume, lighting photography and acting. Congratulations to producer Taylor Downing and director Richard Broad, and especially to Thames TV both for the film and for the information pack which accompanies it - surely the most comprehensive and attractive yet produced for a single programme.

Douglas Allen.

• 'The Luddites'.

BOOK REVIEWS

Museums

"LABOUR History in Museums", a Society for the Study of Labour History and Social History Curators Group joint publication, price £1.50, available from Publications and Sales Section, The Co-operative Union, Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester M60 OAS. Cheques payable to SSLH.

This brief publication gathers together papers presented at a 1985 conference and raises key issues for people concerned with the preservation of labour history and presenting it to the public. These issues are: Should specialist labour history museums exist, or should labour history be collected and interpreted in general social history museums? Should there be a national museum of labour history,and if so how should it determine what to collect vis-a-vis local museums? What role is there for the private collector and what attitude should museums adopt to precious historic material in their possession or in the possession of trades unions.

Elspeth King of the People's Palace argues forcefully for the collection and interpretation of labour history in the context of local social history. Labour history 'should not be removed, separated and ghettoised from the rest of the material culture of the working classes ... and separate museums of labour history would give the public at large the idea that there is no place for labour history within the social history collections of the ordinary local museum'. John Griffin, after eleven years of collecting labour history in Bristol, agrees, warning against 'divorcing organisations from the rest of society. Ghettoes, be they black, gay, working class or whatever are all too easy to control or even crush by the dominant culture'. Like Elspeth King and Derek Janes of Edinburgh he also sees the provision of a general context as important for its ability to show the negative sides of working class culture, be it moralising narrowmindedness and xenophobia of east Bristol or the sectarianism of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Elspeth King also perceives the general museum as providing an opportunity to redress imbalances in traditional labour history, in particular its neglect of the unorganised, the unemployed, the temperance movement, nationalism and the cultural aspects of politics.

Without this context, labour history artefacts, chiefly banners and badges, have to be displayed like paintings in an art gallery and acquire a commodity rather than a historic value. Perhaps the most telling argument for the broad approach is that when the Edinburgh District Council set about establishing a Labour History Museum, it quickly found that, to be meaningful, the story had to be told in the context of working class culture as a whole.

Many of these arguments are directed implicitly or explicitly at the National Museum of Labour History. Terry McCarthy of the NMLH introduces his talk by saying 'I am rather amused by the fact that many museum people still see labour ephemera as being separate from other exhibits' and states that they 'should show everything in a labour context ... institutions who house fine Chippendale furniture could and should explain who made it, their family background and financial situation, the sorts of furniture the makers would live with and the reasons why the great house would have such fine furniture'. As this is precisely what labour history museums so often fail to do, the point would seem to be more an argument for social history than for labour history. Terry McCarthy justifies specialist labour history museums using the analogy of the exclusion of men from feminist meetings. 'The labour movement must be dominant in the labour history museums, as must black people and women in theirs.' Museums are one of the few places where (usually for free) the general public can be informed about their past, including their labour history, so often omitted from school textbooks. The prospect of museums specialising in a whole series of disadvantaged groups seem to be a chronic case of preaching to the converted, and to reduce even further the access of the general public to non-sexist, non-racist, pro-working class material.

The key practical issue, however, is what a National Museum of Labour History should collect. The NMLH collects material which by definition comes from *somewhere* with the inevitable result that it is often seen as poaching from local museums, giving rise to conflict which is not likely to inspire potential donors with confidence. Museum curators are explicitly instructed by their Code of Conduct to consult other museums with whom their collecting area overlaps. Terry McCarthy does not address this issue at all, nor the question of whether there is such a thing as a coherent 'national' labour history which can be told in a single institution.

There is no doubt that private collectors have saved much valuable labour history material which otherwise would be lost. John Gorman, author of "Banner Bright", argues that this is ethical, as long as it is restricted to multiples such as badges, but that one-offs should be preserved in museums as part of the communal heritage of the movement. With regard to material in the trades unions possession John Griffin argues that banners should be left with the branches wherever the latter are still active, as an inspiration. Curators who have found out, too late, that a banner has disappeared during a hasty clear out before a move of premises, will be wary of this approach, however sympathetically they may view it. Perhaps the answer to most of these problems are bound up in John Griffin's concept of pastoral care by museums of material in the community, educating unions and collectors about how to look after material in their possession and to agree on criteria as to when such material should be passed to museums. Perhaps the NMLH could find a useful role for itself by taking on this task at a national level.

Mark O'Neill
Curator
Springburn Museum, Glasgow.

• Labour History in People's Palace.

Jayne Stephenson

J Stephenson (ed), "Five Bob a Week" Stirling Women's Work, 1900 - 1950" Jamieson & Munro, 1988, pp32, £1.00

READERS may recall Ms Stephenson's article in our previous issue of the *Review* and the intimation there of the above book 'in progress'. This beautifully illustrated publication is one of the products of the innovative Stirling Women's Oral History Project and includes extracts from the oral interview transcripts of ten women. Our knowledge of the distinctiveness of women's work and work culture, especially in Scotland, is grossly deficient and the Stirling team should be heartily congratulated on the progress of its project and insights which an oral history approach are shedding into this neglected area of labour history which the editor aptly terms '*her*story'. The book has a limited print run and can be obtained from Stirling District Council Women's Committee. Those interested might also consult the unique tape archive of the Project, which now includes recordings and transcripts of 80 Stirling women.

LABOUR HISTORY NEWS

Glasgow Labour History Workshop

IN the last "Review" we indicated that a regional workshop had been established in Glasgow with the aims of bringing people with common interests together to exchange ideas and experiences, and stimulating enquiry, interest and debate into working class history. The workshop has continued to meet on a regular basis through the past year, providing some continuity of contact and discussion between the bi-annual Scottish Labour History conferences. Apart from the monthly seminars, where outside speakers are invited to discuss their research interests/findings, we have also established a small collective research project and become involved in publicising work for the Scottish Labour History Society, including organising stalls at events like the Festival for Democracy and May Day. We are currently tinkering with plans for Mayfest next year!

GLHW SEMINARS

JIM Treble, a specialist on the history of urban poverty, kicked off the new season of seminars after the summer break with a fascinating discussion of working class responses to unemployment in Glasgow before World War One. Jim's paper is due to be published in full in the subsequent SLHS Journal, due out to members of the society in the Spring of 1989. Bill Knox, author of a biography of James Maxton and editor of the excellent reference book, "Scottish Labour Leaders" discussed the role of the Clydesiders in parliamentary protest in the 1920's and 1930's.James D. Young addressed the group on the topical issue of Scottish Nationalism, examining this theme in an historical context with particular reference to the politics and attitudes of the organised labour movement.

After Christmas, the workshop combined with the University of Strathclyde History Society in a seminar by Chris Whatley who examined the impact of the industrialisation process between 1730 and 1830 on work organisation and the working class in Scotland. Professor John Foster spoke in February on class consciousness on the Clyde in the twentieth century, making particular reference to his recent work with Charles Woolfson on shipbuilding workers. Linda MacKenney, researcher for the 7:84 Theatre Company, gave a stimulating paper on the development of working class theatre in Scotland, supplemented with slides and a contribution from Douglas Allen. Subsequent seminars scheduled before the 1988 summer break include Owen Dudley Edwards on 'James Connolly: The Historian', Jim Schmiechen on 'Sweated Labour, 1830-1914' and Douglas Allen on the post World War Two Squatters Movement in West Scotland.

THE SINGER STRIKE RESEARCH PROJECT

IN the Autumn of 1987 a number of members of the workshop established an open-ended collective research project investigating a strike which took place at the massive Singer Sewing Machine Company in Clydebank in 1911. We felt that it was not enough just to run a seminar programme, but that we also needed to make a positive contribution to the resurrection and preservation of working class history. The Singer strike is an interesting and revealing topic for study. It was initiated by

• Glasgow Workers Theatre Group, 1938.

the minority of female workers in the plant who downed tools in protest against attempts by management to drastically increase their workloads, intensify their labour and introduce new 'scientific management' ideas from America. With a few exceptions, the majority of male workers in the plant struck in sympathy, with a pivotal agitational and organisational role being played in the struggle by the Industrial Workers of Great Britain which had a significant presence within Singers. The demands of the Strike Committee for union recognition and collective bargaining rights were rejected by the fiercely anti-unionist Singer management, who ultimately broke the strike by introducing a novel 'postcard ballot' individually directed at all 11,000 strikers asking them to vote on a return to work. Victimisation was rife after the strike ended, 400-500 of the most militant strike activists being sacked and scattered across the Clydeside industrial area. In the aftermath, trade unionism amongst the semi-skilled singer workers collapsed and socialist political activity in Clydebank waned as blacklisted SDF, SLP and ILP members were forced to leave the district to find work elsewhere.

Sources for the project are not abundant and we would be pleased to hear from anyone who might know the whereabouts of additional relevant material. We have been unable to locate any IWGB/SLP papers for West Scotland and the Singer Company refuses access to its own records, most of which are alleged to have not survived the controversial closure of the Clydebank plant in 1980. Our primary source material, therefore, has been the local, Glasgow, trade and labour press, with "The Socialist" and "Forward" providing most insights. A local appeal also led us to interview a surviving 1911 striker, Bill Lang, now 99 years old, who provided much invaluable information. The research group has met regularly to report back on progress, to discuss findings, ideas, hunches, questions and hypotheses which have arisen, to target specific areas for more work and to flesh out interim working research papers.

This is very much an ongoing project. Our objectives are firstly to compile an archive of pertinent documents, newspaper reports, tape transcripts, illustrations etc. linked to the strike and with the social history of the Singer company to be deposited in the Clydebank Library. Secondly, we are preparing an illustrated booklet on the causes, organisation and aftermath of the Singer strike of 1911. Clydebank local library are providing support and are interested in publishing our findings. Finally, we hope that the 'hands on' experience of this first tentative and experimental GLHW research project will encourage further initiatives, on a collective and/or individual basis, into the labour and working class history of the Clydeside region.

Glasgow Labour HIstory Workshop activities are open to anyone to attend and we would fraternally invite you to participate. Indeed, the successful and continual running of the Workshop depends on as many people as possible coming along and playing an active role in its organisation and development. Any names of potential speakers would also be appreciated. Can we also take this chance to thank all those who have supported the workshop – as participants or speakers – through 1987-1988.

Details of the GLHW programme can be obtained from Arthur McIvor, History Dept, University of Strathclyde, McCance Bld, Richmond St, Glasgow (041-552 4400/041- 638 2250) or any Scottish Labour History Society committee member.

Mayfest Plays – Staging Labour History

"THE Gorbals Story", "The Steamie", and the pageant and exhibition commemorating the Calton weavers – all variously portraying aspects of the history of working class life in the city – were among the resounding successes of the 1987 Mayfest. However, you may have been unfortunate enough to miss the fine production 'Dixon's Has Blasted', which cented on the experiences of a mining family tragically caught up in the Blantyre mining disaster of 1877. Scripted by the talented Hamilton playwright Ann Marie di Mambro, directed by Maggie Kinloch, and performed by the committed Hamilton and Blantyre-based amateur community drama group Just Us, this production played to packed audiences at all venues in the city and in Lanarkshire.

The performance I saw, at Eastfield Community Centre, Cambuslang, was enjoyed by parties of school pupils and by many older people from this ex-mining locality.

Just Us Theatre Company again excelled themselves at this year's Mayfest, with spirited performances of Tom Lannon's new play "The Boys From Bonnymuir", directed by Andrew Wardlaw, and poignantly supported by original songs written and performed by Wattie Macdonald and Kate Kramer. The theme covered episodes in the Scottish radical rising of 1820, including the trial and execution of Andrew Hardie and John Baird. The 1820 Society were among the sponsors.

The Just Us performances, and "Fit A Turn Oot" – a community play about the first strike of female textile workers in Aberdeen in 1834 – have demonstrated the potential of community drama for attracting new audiences to labour history themes. Leslie Dunbar got the idea for her play from reading my book "Textiles and Toil", published by Aberdeen City Libraries in 1984. "Fit a Turn Oot" was performed in 1987 at several venues in Aberdeen and the North East. Financial sponsorship came from the City Council and the Scottish Arts Council. Grampian Education Authority have made a video of the play and with accompanying notes it has been packaged into a module for use in history classes. Another outcome of the project was an oral history workshop organised by the Workers Educational Association, and involving retired textile workers. There is plenty of scope for exciting co-operation among historians, writers, and voluntary groups, backed up by funding and sponsorship from local authorities and labour movement bodies. Let's get our act together now.

Robert Duncan

Bob Purdie

RUSKIN college in Oxford has been through a difficult time lately, one which all its well-wishers in the Labour movement hope is behind it. It can, however, prosper from its recent appointment of one of its own former students, Bob Purdie, as tutor in Politics.

Bob is, of course, a good friend of the Scottish Labour History Society and has kept in touch with our work during the seven years he has lived in Belfast, though much of his formidable energy there was channelled into the work of the Irish Labour History Society of which he was for some time Assistant National Secretary.

It was Bob's interest in Irish labour movements and Irish Socialism which took him across the water, though of course, this is an interest traceable back to his years of active involvement with the International Marxist Group for whom, in 1972, he wrote a much-discussed pamphlet, "Ireland Unfree."

Prior to that Bob worked in industry, at Clydebank and in Kirkcaldy, becoming a shop stewards' convenor. After his period of full time political work with the IMG and its paper "Red Weekly," he won a place at Ruskin, taking degrees thereafter at Warwick and Strathclyde Universities. He is presently completing a thesis on the Northern Ireland Civil Rights movement, but apart from his work for the Irish Labour History Society, has found time both to write regularly for "Fortnight" magazine as well as serving on its editorial committee.

There can be few more shrewd observers of the provinces's political scene than Bob who has not been afraid to re-examine views formed in an earlier phase of the present conflict there. He is not afraid, either, to speak his mind where it counts about those on the left who should know better than to identify themselves with the murder-machine of the Provisional IRA on the basis of a half-understood knowledge of Connolly's writings. Recently, he has worked patiently with Paddy Devlin and others to prepare the ground for non-sectarian Socialist initiatives in a community whose problems cry out for them.

Belfast's loss, however, will most certainly be Ruskin's gain, and ours too, for we need Bob Purdie's scholarship, his integrity, and his clear voice in the Labour movement's continuing debates on Ireland and, as important, on the right road for Scotland at what has the potential to be a turning point in our relationship to the Anglo-British state and the corrupt and reactionary regime now in control of it. It will be good to see Bob Purdie back at some of our conferences and perhaps, when he can make the time, contributing to the society's publications.

Ian S. Wood

News From Nowhere

MOTHERWELL Branch of the Communist Party inaugurated an annual William Gallacher Memorial Meeting in December 1987; first speaker was Gordon McLennan on the Poll Tax.

Lanarkshire EIS held their 2nd John MacLean Memorial Lecture at the McLennan Galleries, Glasgow on December 3rd 1987; speaker was Terry Brotherstone on "Nationalism and Internationalism : John MacLean and the Russian Revolution" ; among the audience was Nan Milton, daughter of John MacLean.

Motherwell Library kicked off a travelling exhibition of Sean Hudson's photographs of International Brigade veterans, used in Ian MacDougall's recent oral history "Voices from the Spanish Civil War"

Besoms Theatre Group presented a one-woman theatre show "Cloth Caps and Petticoats" at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, in March 1988; the subject was Keir Hardie - as seen by the women in his life.

March 1988 saw the death of Kathleen Noonan, at the age of 95, only child of Robert Noonan - better known as Robert Tressell, author of the socialist classic "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists" (first published in 1914, three years after his death).

History Workshop Teachers Group provided input to some of the sessions at History Workshop 21 at Newcastle in November 1987; interested teachers can contact and receive issues of the newsletter from : Steve Day, 110 Bentley Lane, Leeds LS6 4AJ

During 1989, the Transport and General Workers Union will be promoting a series of events round the country to celebrate the founding of 'new unionism' with the Matchgirls strike of 1888 and the Dock Strike of 1889; further information from Mr. Ray Collins, Admin. Officer, TGWU, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3JB.

KEY DATES IN LABOUR HISTORY

1888: The Scottish Labour Party

ONE hundred years ago, in April 1888, Keir Hardie contested a Parliamentary by-election in the Mid-Lanark constituency. Although heavily defeated - he came last with only 600-odd votes behind both a Liberal and a Tory - the first step had been taken in the slow and painful process of building a labour party. More significant than the contest itself, however, was the organisation that developed out of it.

On the 19th May there was a meeting of twenty-seven men held in Glasgow to consider the possibility of forming a 'Parliamentary Labour Party in Scotland'. The formal inauguration of the Scottish (Parliamentary) Labour Party took place three months later on 25th August at a conference held in the Waterloo Rooms, Glasgow. R. B. Cunningham-Graham (then a sitting Liberal M.P.) chaired the conference and amongst those present were: John Ferguson, leader of the Irish Nationalists in Scotland, Dr. G.B. Clark, the Crofters' M.P., James Shaw Maxwell, John Murdoch, Richard McGhee, William Small, and, of course, Hardie.

The object of the new Party was stated to be, "to educate the people politically, and to secure the return to Parliament and all local bodies of members pledged to its programme." This programme included: adult suffrage; triennial parliaments; Home Rule for each country in the British Empire; Nationalisation of Land and Minerals; an Eight Hours Bill; abolition of the Poor Law and its substitution by a system of National Insurance; Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic; Free Education; State aquisition of railways, waterways and tramways; a cumulative income tax. *[1]*

Cunningham-Graham struck the keynote of the Conference when he pointed out how both the Liberal and Tory Parties had opposed his Bill to secure an eight hour day for the miners and argued that, "all who had the interests of the working classes at heart should join together in breaking down the gentlemanly tone of the House of Commons, which boycotted every measure having for its object the relief of the poor; and he believed this would best be done by sending to Parliament *bona-fide* working men who knew what they wanted and were determined to have it". *[2]*

Hardie's decision to contest Mid-Lanark was a challenge to the Liberal Party and particularly the "middle- class cliques" who controlled the local Liberal Associations. Despite overwhelming support for the Liberals among the working class electorate, the Party in Scotland was resolutely opposed to selecting any 'Labour ' candidate. Had it been willing to swallow its prejudice the history of Labour representation and the Labour Party in Scotland may have been very different.

As things stood, the Labour movement in Scotland was too weak to force the Liberals to accept even a limited number of Labour candidates.This was unlike the situation in England where there was sufficient strength, particularly in a number of mining areas, for certain Lib-Lab M.P's. to be returned under the Liberal banner. In Scotland the trade unions were too small and localised - and even the miners were too weakly organised - to dominate any constituencies. It was this industrial weakness which convinced miners' leaders such as Hardie, Chisholm Robertson and William Small that a political solution was necessary if the miners were to make any sustainable gains.

The year prior to Mid-Lanark there had been an especially bitter dispute in Lanarkshire which ended up with not only police reinforcements but also troops being sent into the miners' rows. This incident is regarded as crucial to Hardie's 'conversion' to socialism. Liberal opinion was outraged, not by the action of the authorities but by the miners, whose actions were castigated as, "lawless proceedings of the lowest section and population of the central mining districts of Lanarkshire". *[3]*

Although this lent a certain edge to relations with the Liberals, the SLP was not formed for the purpose of waging the class war. The object of Labour representation in Parliament was able to unite - at least temporarily - a disparate coalition of forces: trade unionists, radicals or land nationalisers, and socialists. For the radicals the land question was really the beginning and end of the social question while for the socialists it was merely a (significant) step in the right direction towards the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Initially, the radical input to the SLP was the greater but their commitment to Labour representation was basically limited to pressurising the Liberal Party - of which they were a part - not challenging it. Support for a Labour candidate at a by-election was one thing but the pressure of a general election was a completely different matter and the Election of 1892 when there were a number of Labour candidates put forward in and around Glasgow saw most of the radicals back on the Liberal platform.

Most of the socialists were indifferent, at first, to the 'Labour Party'. Generally speaking, socialists were hostile to 'politics', by which was meant the (sham) Parliamentary battles of Liberal and Tory, and to any belief that capitalism could reform itself. There were two socialists organisations in existence: the more 'purist' Socialist League (SL) and the Social Democratic Federation (SDF). Although the latter did accept the necessity of 'politics' its involvement had tended to be opportunist and it had failed to make any electoral impact.

Within the SL, which in Scotland had been the more active organisation, figures like William Small had been arguing for a more constructive policy than the constant emphasis on 'education' and 'making socialists', and attempted (unsuccessfully) to steer the SL towards forming a 'Socialistic Labour Party'. The SLP was hardly this but it was, nontheless, a party with a progressive programme far in advance of official Liberal policies and with definite links to the working class. Over the next few years ex-members of the SL joined the SLP in increasing numbers. At the same time the autonomous structure of the SLP allowed members of the SDF to play an active part within it and, in fact, in Edinburgh it was James Connolly and his comrades in the SDF who established the SLP.

By the time of the Bradford conference of January 1893 which founded the Independent Labour Party the SLP had declared its object to be socialism and pushed for the name of the new party to be the 'Socialist Labour Party'. At Bradford George Carson of Glasgow argued that, "In Scotland the Labour Party had come to the conclusion that it was best to call a spade a spade". *[4]*

Although defeated on this issue the SLP did have significant impact with the election of Keir Hardie as Chairman and Shaw Maxwell as secretary. There was little doubt that the SLP would throw in its lot with the ILP but it was to be another two years before it formally dissolved itself into the larger body.

Any judgement of the SLP's significance has first of all to recognise that it failed in its primary objective, which was to secure

...cont'd

working class representation in Parliament. Nevertheless, the importance of the SLP is clear. It is with the formation of the SLP that the forces of Labour in Scotland appear as independent political force. The SLP may not have had a mass membership or support but its alliance of socialists and trade unionists foreshadowed not only the ILP but also the Labour Party. From 1888 Labour pushed itself onto the political agenda and at every subsequent General Election there was at least one Labour candidate. It is because of these efforts that we can, and should, celebrate one hundred years of the Labour Party in Scotland.

1. D. Lowe, Souvenirs of Scottish Labour, pp 3-4.
2. ibid. p 3.
3. North British Mail, 11th February 1887, quoted in Fred Reid, Keir Hardie, p.91.
4. ILP, Report of the First General Conference.

HARRY McSHANE (1891-1988)

ON the 13th of April 1988, Harry McShane, veteran socialist and Marxist, died at the age of 96, three weeks before his 97th birthday. There have been many highlights in Harry's life, many struggles and issues, but I think there are some issues for which he has continuously fought and never wavered in his struggle for truth and justice.

Ireland

The question of the fight for independence and the ending of partition, a United Ireland, has never been far from his thoughts all his eighty years in the socialist movement. He has always said that those people who ran away from the fight for a United Ireland betrayed the very basis of the class struggle; they allowed the exploitation and oppression of the Irish people by the English establishment to continue as it had done for over 600 years. One of the first acts of protest he carried out when he was a young teenager took place at an election meeting in Kinning Park where one of the infamous family of Dunglas's was the candidate. Harry got up and moved the resolution in a packed hall of over 200 people calling for the release of Jim Larkin who had been arrested during the 1908 Dublin lockout for sedition, after asking the soldiers to join the strike. He was immediately thrown out of the hall. However he bought some cakes of pipe clay from a local shop and chalked all round the district calling for the release of Jim Larkin.

BERNADETTE DEVLIN

One of the last meetings on Ireland that Harry participated in - sharing the platform with Bernadette Devlin - took place in the North Woodside Halls during the Civil Rights campaign in Northern Ireland. The hall was surrounded by over a thousand Orangemen led by Pastor Glass, and the several hundred people who attended had to get police protection going into and leaving the hall. Both speakers got a great reception, but the whole audience burst into laughter - led by Harry - when Bernadette said that the only regret she had about getting expelled from the House of Commons for punching the Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, was that the punch was not hard enough. (Shades of Ron Brown and "the mace"?)

SOCIALISM AND CATHOLICISM

Prior to 1908, when he joined the British Socialist Party, Harry spent all his spare time reading and studying every available source on religion, materialism and atheism, to counter and debate with the free thinkers who dominated the speakers on the platforms in the Glasgow Green. When he became a Marxist and accepted the materialist conception of history, he was one of the most informed socialists on religion at that particular time, and particularly on the Catholic Church. In his early years he had many debates, not only in the Glasgow Green, but in the columns of most Catholic newspapers of that period, raising the contradiction of accepting the teachings of the church and being a socialist. He was not alone, as John Wheatley justified his position from the opposite end of the spectrum in the columns of the Catholic Observer and the Catholic Truth Society. All this reading and study held Harry in good stead in later years when he did correct leading Catholic clergy when they incorrectly quoted the Papal encyclicals or the Rerum Novarum.

National Unemployed Workers Movement

No record of the contribution of Harry McShane to the workers' movement would be complete without some reference to his work with the unemployed. The NUWM was probably the finest rank-and-file movement ever seen in Britain. It was in fact the highlight of his life, and he made it a fearless fighting organisation despite it being unofficial. It was a well-respected body and put the case for the unemployed at meetings, rallies and marches all over the country. Harry took them into restaurants, hotels, the stock exchange, and council chambers in order to publicise the real plight of the unemployed. He never forgot to encourage the rank-and-file to fully participate at every stage of the fight for full employment or full maintenance; he demanded food, clothing, household goods as a right and not a gift. Harry's interest in the unemployed and the right to work continued after World War Two and right up to his death.

MARX AND ENGELS

Harry's guiding philosophy was the teachings of Marx and Engels. He worked closely with John MacLean, and together with James McDougall, Sandy Ross and Peter Marshall they formed the Tramp Trust. They travelled as far as Aberdeen and Carlisle spreading the Marxist message, sometimes sleeping rough after they had held several meetings in the course of the day. Harry always linked his Marxism to the class struggle, and any group of workers who were involved in strikes or lockouts could be assured of his support. He always said you cannot be neutral when the workers are under attack.

One of the last developments in Harry's philosophy was his discovery of Raya Dunayevskaya's book "Marxism and Freedom". Its expounding of the humanism of Marxism struck a chord in his thinking against the bureaucracy of party zealots he had met in many parties and organisations. For the first time he felt the human face of Marxism had been unveiled. He was asked by the author to write a preface for the second edition, but such was his modesty that - even after sixty-odd years in the socialist movement - he felt he was not qualified to undertake such a task. His modesty disguised a strength of character and determination that never accepted defeat; right to the end he had complete confidence in the working class and the socialist cause. We were privileged to have known such a special man.

Hugh Savage

Dundee Labour Housing Council.

A GREAT DEMONSTRATION

WILL BE HELD IN

GILFILLAN HALL,

ON

TUESDAY, 21st MARCH

To demand that Rent, Taxes, &c., of Men serving or called to serve in the [illegible] be a State charge duri[illegible] perio[illegible];

that Missives on Houses above [illegible] abolished [illegible] presently excluded, be put under [illegible] provisions of the Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restri[illegible]

MR JAS: BROWN WILL OCC[illegible] CHAIR,
SUPPORTED BY REPRE[illegible]ZENS.

MEN!—**If you require to fight, [illegible] Government must make adequate provision to secure your homes.**

WOMEN!—**You should be intensely interested in this matter. It is you who have to "make ends meet."**

Doors open at 7.30. Commence at 8 p.m.

CONCERT & COLLECTION

ALL HOUSEHOLDERS should ally themselves to the Committee that saved them from Increases of Rent and Eviction. Hand in your Names and Addresses to any of the Stewards at Meeting, or write to

JAS. G. FRASER, *Secretary*.

Labour Club, Murraygate.